

## **Don't ignore symptoms after head injury**

Head injuries occur more often than people think. Severe head injuries may lead to permanent brain damage, long-term disability, even death.

In Hong Kong, the majority of head injury patients are male aged between 20 and 50. Traffic accidents, occupational accidents, accidents at home and falls are the most common causes of head injuries. There are many ways to prevent them:

- Drive safely, do not drink and drive;
- Obey traffic rules when crossing roads;
- Wear helmets when riding bicycles;
- Always use safety gears when working at heights;
- Take good care of the elderly to prevent them from falling;

Head injury patients often require emergency treatment. However, symptoms may not appear straight after the injury had occurred. Hence, the trauma is often overlooked. Head injuries may be life-threatening. Even victims of minor injuries require close observation. Signs that a head injury may be serious include:

- Headache that gets worse in the morning or when lying down;
- Nausea or vomiting;
- Blurred or double vision;
- Weakness or numbness of the arms or legs;
- Seizures;
- Increased confusion;

Treatment and its result depend on the severity of the injury. Prompt medical treatment may prevent the injury from getting worse and a better recovery. Patients with severe injuries usually need rehabilitation.