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| **Child & Youth Outpatient Clinic**  **[[pnhi\_U]]**  [[procdate]] | Regional Call Centre  Telephone: 0800 333 477 |
| [[dmhctitl\_P]] [[dmhcgnam\_P]] [[dmhcsnam\_P]]  [[dmhcprac\_P]]  [[dmhcadr1\_P]]  [[dmhcadr2\_P]]  [[dmhcadr3\_P]]  **[[dmhcadr4\_U]] [[dmhcpost\_U]]**  Dear |  |

**[[pgname\_P]][[psname\_U]]: DOB [[pbdate\_U]]**

**[[ptmxadd1\_P]], [[ptmxadd2\_P]], [[ptmxadd3\_P]], [[ptmxadd4\_P]]**

**[[ptelep\_U]] [[pmobile\_U]]**

Head banging is surprisingly common. Up to 20 percent of babies and toddlers bang their head on purpose, with boys three times more likely to do it than girls. Head banging often starts in the second half of the first year of life and peaks between 18 and 24 months of age. A child's head banging habit may last for several months, or even years, though most children outgrow it by 3 years of age.  
  
Possibly reasons for head banging include:

* Self-comfort. As strange as it may sound, most children who bang their heads do it to relax. Children bang their head rhythmically when falling asleep, when waking up in the middle of the night, or even while sleeping.
* Pain relief. A child is more likely to bang their head when they have an ear infection or are suffering from some other physical discomfort. Head banging may help your child feel better, perhaps by distracting her from the pain she is feeling elsewhere.
* Frustration. Children may bang their head during temper tantrums as a way of venting strong emotions, as they haven’t learned to express feelings adequately through words,
* A need for attention. Ongoing head banging may be a way for your child to get your attention.
* A developmental problem. Head banging can be associated with autism and other developmental disorders— but usually there are lots of other concerning behaviours. Rarely does head banging alone signal a serious problem.

What can I do about it?

Make sure ……….. gets plenty of positive attention from you when **she's** not banging her head. If **she** still bangs **her** head to get your attention, try not to make a big deal about it, or you may reinforce the behaviour.

If **she's** still in a cot, check all the screws and bolts once a month or more to make sure the rocking isn't loosening them. If **she** sleeps in a regular bed, think about moving it away from the wall.  
  
………may get a bruise or two, but don't worry — head banging is usually a "self-regulating" behaviour. This means …… is unlikely to hit **her** head hard enough to seriously injure **herself.**

Help …….. find alternative forms of rhythmic expression, such as dancing, marching, clapping to music, or beating on toy bongo drums. You might also try putting a metronome in ……….s room to give **her** the comfort of a steady rhythm.

If ………. bangs **her** head as a way of relaxing from a busy day, a relaxing night time routine can help. Try a warm bath, a calm rock on your lap, a backrub and a quiet story or song before lights out. Soft music in the bedroom can be soothing, too.  
  
We have not arranged to see ……….. in the Paediatric Clinic but please do not hesitate to contact us should you have ongoing concern, or if there are any other concerns regarding **her** behaviour or development.

Yours sincerely

*(Electronically checked and approved)*

**Paediatric Team**

Paediatrician