

Care after a minor head injury

Emergency Department

Information for Patients

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Introduction

You have been diagnosed with a mild head injury. Minor head injuries are very common. They often do not cause long term problems.

A responsible adult must accompany you when going home. Do not stay at home alone for the first 24 hours after leaving hospital.

Make sure you have a phone close by for the first 24 to 48 hours (1 to 2 days). This is in case you have an emergency and need medical help.

We recommend that you show this leaflet to the person who will be with you. This is so that they know what symptoms you may experience.

What symptoms might I have after my head injury?

Most people recover quickly after a head injury. It is common to get some symptoms over the next few days. These often settle within 2 weeks. If these symptoms last longer you should see your GP.

Common symptoms you may have :

- Mild headaches
- Feeling dizzy
- Feeling sick (nausea)
- Feeling sensitive to light or noise
- Restlessness
- Feeling irritable or short-tempered

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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

- Having problems concentrating
- Feeling low in mood, tearful or anxious
- Having problems sleeping
- Having problems with memory
- Tiredness
- Lack of appetite

What can help after a head injury?

Rest for 2 to 3 days. You can slowly return to your normal activities like going to school, college or work. Use your symptoms to help you decide if you are ready to return to normal activities. If your symptoms get worse, go back to a level of activity that you can do comfortably.

You can slowly return to light, non-contact exercise. Slowly build up the amount and intensity of the exercise until you reach your normal exercise routine. This may take a few weeks.

What advice should I follow?

Do:

- Have plenty of rest and avoid stressful situations.
- If you have a headache, take painkillers like paracetamol as it says on the box.
- Have a phone nearby if you are left alone.
- Make an appointment to see your GP in a week's time if you have had a scan of your head.

Do not:

- Do not drink alcohol until you feel better.
- Do not drive a car or ride a motorbike, bicycle, scooter or electric bike. Or operate machinery until you have fully recovered.
- Do not take any recreational drugs.
- Do not take any medications that have not been prescribed for you.
- Do not take sleeping pills, sedatives or tranquilisers unless a doctor has prescribed them for you since your head injury.
- Do not play any contact sports, such as football, rugby, boxing or martial arts. This is for at least 3 weeks, or without getting advice from your GP first.
- Do not sign any legal paper work until you have recovered.
- Do not take aspirin unless it has been prescribed for you.
- Do not return to school, work, college full time until you have fully recovered.
- Do not stay alone at home for the first 48 hours (2 days) after leaving the hospital.

What symptoms should I look out for?

Although unlikely, there is a small risk of getting complications after a head injury.

Get someone to take you to the emergency department or call 999 as soon as possible if you have any of these symptoms:

- If you lose consciousness or do not have full consciousness. For example, have a problem keeping your eyes open.
- If you are drowsy (feeling sleepy) and this lasts longer than 1 hour when you would normally be wide awake.
- If you have problems understanding or speaking. For example you have slurred speech.
- If you have confusion or a change in your behaviour. E.g. knowing where you are, what time of day it is, who you are with and what is going on around you.
- If you have any loss of balance or problems walking.
- If you have a weakness in 1 or more of your arms or legs.
- If you have changes in your eyesight including double or reduced vision.
- If you have a bad headache which does not go away with painkillers like paracetamol.
- If you are being sick (vomiting).
- If you have a seizure (convulsions or fits) or collapse suddenly.
- If you have clear fluid coming out of your ears or nose.
- If you notice bleeding from 1 or both ears:
 - This is important if you have a condition that stops your blood clotting normally. Or if you take blood thinning (anticoagulant) medicines like apixaban, rivaroxaban, edoxaban, aspirin, clopidogrel or heparin injections.

Long-term problems

Most people recover quickly from a head injury. They do not have any long-term problems. Only a few people take longer to recover or get problems after weeks or months.

These problems could be:

- tiredness (fatigue)
- dizziness,
- problems with coordination,
- Problems with memory,
- Problems with sight,

This is sometimes called post concussion syndrome.



A few people get problems with their hormones after a head injury. The levels of sex hormones can fall. This can cause:

- hot flushes,
- fatigue,
- loss of body hair,
- reduced sex drive,
- irregular periods,
- erectile dysfunction,
- reduced fertility.

These may happen a few months after the injury. See your GP as soon as possible if you have any of these symptoms for more than 2 weeks.

If you cannot see your GP or you are not sure what to do then call **NHS 111** help if you need medical help right away.

Contact details

Emergency Department Switchboard: **0300 303 1573**

Injuries Unit: **0116 258 5727**

Ambulatory: **0116 258 0051**

Red majors: **0116 258 0164**

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على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
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