

Head injury (child) - for parents and carers

Your child has been carefully examined and appears to have sustained a minor head injury and should make a full recovery. Although rare, complications may develop, therefore you or another responsible adult should observe your child for 48 hours and if any of the following symptoms develop, **please go to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department, as it is outside the scope of the Minor Injury Unit:**

- Unconsciousness or lack of full consciousness (eg problems keeping eyes open)
- Vomiting - it is not uncommon for children to vomit once or twice after a head injury, but if he/she continues to vomit, your child should be re-examined.
- Headache - headaches are common after a head injury, but if severe and unrelieved by Paracetamol, you should seek further advice.
- Drowsiness - children will often want to sleep after a head injury. You do not need to keep them awake. However, you should rouse them after an hour or so. If they rouse normally and are not confused, they may go back to sleep. When asleep, check to see that he or she appears to be breathing normally and is sleeping in a normal position. If you are unable to or have difficulty in waking them, attend A&E immediately.
- Confusion - in small babies, this may appear as irritability or difficulty in settling them. In young children, they might not know where they are or get things muddled up. They might have problems speaking or understanding.
- Fits or convulsions - lay the child on their side to protect their airway and dial 999 for an ambulance. Do not try to push anything in the mouth or forcibly open the airway, you are more likely to do damage.
- Any weakness - in one or more arms or legs or one side of face
- Dizziness, loss of balance or walking strangely.
- Any problems with their eye sight- such as blurring of vision or double vision.
- Blood or clear fluid leaking from the nose or ear.
- New deafness - in one or both ears.
- Unusual breathing patterns.
- Develops a boggy swelling to head.

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Things you shouldn't worry about

They may feel some other symptoms over the next few days which should disappear in the next 2 weeks. These include a mild headache, feeling sick (without vomiting), dizziness, irritability or bad temper, problems concentrating or problems with their memory, tiredness, lack of appetite or problems sleeping. If you feel very concerned about any of these symptoms in the first few days after discharge, you should discuss them with your own doctor. If these problems do not go away after 2 weeks, you should seek medical attention.

You should give simple painkillers, such as Paracetamol for headaches. Painkillers are more effective if given regularly, but do not exceed the maximum daily dose.

Things that will help the patient get better

If the patient follows this advice it should help them get better more quickly and it may help any symptoms they have to go away:

- Do have plenty of rest and avoid stressful situations.
- Do not play any contact sport (for example, football) for at least 3 weeks without talking to your doctor first.

Things you should do to make sure the patient is OK

- Do not allow them to return to school until you feel they have completely recovered.
- Do not leave the patient alone in the home for the first 24-48 hours after leaving the Minor Injuries Unit.
- Do make sure that there is a nearby telephone and that the patient stays within easy reach of medical help.

Please contact your GP or NHS111 for any queries or concerns.

If you would like this information in another format or language, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net

November 2023 V2



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