

Patient Information

Adult Head Injury Advice

We have assessed your head injury and it's very unlikely to cause worrying symptoms in the coming days. It is safe for you to leave hospital but it is best not stay at home alone for the first 24 hours after leaving hospital. Also, stay near a telephone for the first 24 to 48 hours in case you need to access emergency medical help.

Do not drive, cycle or operate machinery until you feel completely better. You can ask your doctor for advice about this.

When to go back to hospital?

Go to your nearest hospital emergency department as soon as possible, if you develop any of these symptoms:

- unconsciousness or lack of full consciousness (for example, a problem keeping your eyes open)
- drowsiness (feeling sleepy) that lasts longer than 1 hour when you would normally be wide awake
- problems understanding or speaking
- loss of orientation (not knowing where you are, what time it is, who you're with and what's going on around you)
- loss of balance or problems walking
- weakness in 1 or more arms or legs
- problems with your eyesight
- a painful headache that will not go away or ease
- vomiting (being sick)
- seizures (also called convulsions or fits)
- clear fluid coming out of your ears or nose
- bleeding from 1 or both ears.

If you're unwell, get someone to take you to the emergency department or call 111 or 999.

Symptoms not usually of concern

You may notice other symptoms over the next few days that should disappear in the next 2 weeks without the need for further treatment in hospital. These include: a mild headache, feeling sick (without being sick), dizziness, irritability or bad temper, problems concentrating, problems with memory, tiredness, lack of appetite, problems sleeping.

See your doctor if you are very concerned about any of these symptoms in the first few days after leaving hospital or if the symptoms have not gone away after 2 weeks.

What can help after a head injury?

Rest for 2 to 3 days. Then, gradually return to normal activities such as school, college or work. Be guided by your symptoms. If they get worse, go back to a level of activity that was manageable.

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

Avoid any contact sports, such as football, rugby, boxing or martial arts, for at least 3 weeks.

Do not take any alcohol or illegal drugs. Do not take sleeping pills, sedatives or tranquilisers unless a doctor has prescribed them for you.

Long-term problems

Most people recover quickly from a head injury and do not have any long-term problems. But some people take longer to recover, or develop problems after weeks or months. These problems could include but are not limited to fatigue, dizziness, imbalance, or problems with coordination, memory or vision. This is sometimes called post-concussion syndrome.



NHS Highland Concussion Guidance
<https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/media/gbdnow0g/patient-information-concussion-adult.pdf>



Further Head Injury Advice and useful links e.g. sport concussion
<https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/your-services/all-services-a-z/major-trauma/head-injury-advice/>

Printouts available

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