**Advice for Parents/Carers of Children with Head Injury**

Your child has suffered a head injury for which they have been seen in the Emergency Department. A thorough examination has been made to try and exclude any serious complications, and it is felt they can safely go home.

**Do not leave the patient alone in the home for the first 24 hours after leaving hospital.**

Make sure there is a nearby telephone, and that you child stays within easy reach of medical help.

It is important that you observe them, and if any of the following occur:

* Unconsciousness or lack of full consciousness
* Drowsiness (feeling sleepy) lasting more than 1 hour when the child would normally be wide awake
* Severe headache or a headache that won’t go away
* Vomiting
* Not seeing normally
* Abnormal behaviour, restlessness, confusion, problems understanding or speaking
* Weakness or numbness of an arm or leg, loss of balance or problems walking
* Seizures (also called convulsions or fits)
* Loss of watery fluid or blood from ear or nose
* *Or if you are worried about them*

contact your doctor or ring **111** or if you are really worried, bring the child back to the Emergency Department

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| **If you are concerned about a RAPID CHANGE in their condition****call 999.** |

You can let your child sleep (perhaps in your bedroom), but you should check them at two-hour intervals during the night, especially if the injury occurred in the late evening. To check whether he or she is sleeping normally, disturb gently. A normal reaction of moving or making a sound is enough - the child does not need to be completely woken up, unless you are in doubt.

Also check whether your child is breathing normally and sleeping in a normal position.

**What about longer-term effects after a minor head injury**?

Within about 48 hours of a minor head injury, there is usually full recovery, but sometimes symptoms such as **tiredness, dizziness, blurred vision, headache, irritability, poor concentration, lack of appetite, problems sleeping and feeling generally 'off colour'** may continue for longer (post-head injury syndrome/post-concussion syndrome).

**Although this is not serious, the over 5s should not return to school, study, sport or complex tasks and should limit computer screen time, until you feel they have recovered, otherwise symptoms (and anxiety) tend to increase.** Family, teachers or friends expecting too much too soon can also make matters worse. Usually, a gradual return to normal activities is advisable.

If your child has any ongoing concussion symptoms they should not return to contact sport (such as football, rugby, or any activity with a risk of head injury) until their symptoms have settled **for at least 2 weeks.** Then a graduated return to play is advised before contact again. Further head injury before full recovery may increase the severity of concussion.

Recovery is usually within a few weeks, but for some patients this can take longer. Seek medical advice if in doubt or worried. (Take this information with you if you see your own General Practitioner.)

**Remember, if any of the warning signs listed earlier occur at any stage, seek urgent medical advice.**

**Further advice, information and support is available from:**

Headway Devon (a registered charity)

Tel: **(01392) 211822**

Web: [**www.headway.org.uk**](https://www.headway.org.uk/)

Child Brain Injury Trust

Tel: **0303 303 2248**

Web: **[www.childbraininjurytrust.org.uk](https://www.childbraininjurytrust.org.uk/)**

Email: **info@cbituk.org**

Further advice regarding returning to sports following a head injury can be found here:

* Understanding Concussion – England Rugby. Find it at **<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gfD-_JFf9s>**
* UK Concussion Guidelines for Grassroots Sport. Find it at **<https://sportandrecreation.org.uk/policy/research-publications/concussion-guidelines>**

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This information can be offered in other formats on request, including a language other than English and Braille.

**RD&E Main Switchboard: 01392 411611**

**For RDUH services log on to:** [**www.royaldevon.nhs.uk**](https://www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/)

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