

Advice for Parents/Carers of Children with Head Injury

Your child has been examined and is, as far as it is possible to tell, well enough to go home.

He/she should avoid excessive activity and be watched carefully for the next 24 hours.

Bring your child back to the Emergency Department **IMMEDIATELY** if he/she:

- **Vomits**
- Has a persistent **headache**, not helped by paracetamol.
- Has weakness of one or more limbs
- Becomes unusually **drowsy, irritable** or **unsteady**.
- Has a **convulsion** (fit) or will **not wake up**.
- **Behaves** or **breathes abnormally**.
- Has continuous **discharge or blood loss** from the ear, nose or mouth.
- *Or if you are worried about them.*

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

If you are unsure what to do, or wish for advice, please contact your GP or phone 111.

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 seek medical advice if in doubt or worried. (Take this leaflet 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

Child Brain Injury Trust

Tel: **0303 303 2248**

Web: www.childbraininjurytrust.org.uk

Email: info@cbituk.org

For a 7 minute video on concussion and more information please Google "**RFU Concussion-Headcare**", or visit www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/playos/player.../concussion-headcare/resources/

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 RD&E services log on to: www.rdehospital.nhs.uk

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