

Patient information

Head Injury - Advice for Adults when leaving hospital

You have had a head injury. The team has completed assessments and considers you well enough to leave hospital. This leaflet gives general advice for adults who are returning home after a head injury.

General advice

When you return home:

- Have a responsible adult stay with you for the first 24 hours after leaving hospital
- Have plenty of rest and avoid stressful situations for at least 24 hours
- Take painkillers and usual medications as recommended by your doctor
- Make sure you are within easy reach of a telephone and medical help
- **Do Not** take sleeping pills, sedatives or tranquilisers unless advised by a doctor
- **Do Not** drive or operate machinery until you have been seen by your GP
- **Do Not** drink alcohol or take recreational drugs
- **Do Not** play any contact sport (e.g. rugby, football or horse riding) until you have been seen by your GP and your symptoms have completely settled
- **Do Not** return to school, college or work until you feel you have completely recovered from your head injury

What to look out for

Some people who have had a minor head injury develop problems later. **If you develop any of the following symptoms you should call 999 or go straight to your nearest Emergency Department:**

- Loss of consciousness or increased drowsiness (feeling sleepy) when you would normally be wide awake
- Seizures (also known as fits or convulsions)
- Slurred speech or new difficulty with understanding, reading and/or writing
- Any new weakness or heaviness in your arms or legs
- Any loss of balance or problems walking
- Double vision or new issues with your eyesight
- A painful headache that won't go away
- Abnormal or unusual behaviour e.g. aggression or confusion
- Bleeding from one or both of your ears
- Clear fluid coming out of your ear or nose

Common symptoms

You may feel unwell for a few days after a head injury. Common symptoms include:

- Mild headache
- Feeling sick (without vomiting)
- Dizziness
- Poor concentration or short term memory problems

- Irritability or bad temper
- Tiredness and difficulty sleeping
- Lack of appetite

These symptoms should disappear within two weeks without treatment. If they do not go away after two weeks or if they worsen, you should see your own doctor. It is recommended that you see your doctor before returning to driving and strenuous or dangerous activities.

Support available

Most patients recover quickly from their accident and experience no long term problems. However, some patients only develop problems after a few weeks or months. If you start to feel that things are not quite right (e.g. memory problems, or not feeling like your normal self) then please contact your GP as soon as possible to ensure you are recovering properly.

- The **NHS website** (www.nhs.uk) provides online health information and guidance.
- The **NHS 111** phone line offers medical help and advice from trained advisors 24 hours a day. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.
- **Headway** is a charity that provides support to patients who have experienced a brain injury and have ongoing problems. You can find more information at: www.headway.org.uk | www.headwayeastsussex.org.uk | Helpline: 0808 800 2244
- If you feel you need community support you can contact **Health and Social Care Connect (HSCC)** on 0345 608 0191
- If you feel you need community therapy, you should speak to your **GP** about a referral for this service.

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team - Tel: 0300 131 4731 or by email at: eshtr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 131 4500 Email: esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Dr Danielle Vidler – Consultant and Clinical lead Emergency Department CQ

Mr Utham Shanker – Consultant and Clinical lead Emergency Department EDGH

The directorate group that has agreed this patient information leaflet:

URGENT CARE

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