

## Paediatric Head Injuries: Information for Parents, Carers and Relatives When Leaving Hospital

Minor head injuries and knocks to the head are common, particularly for children. The medical team has assessed your child and feels it is appropriate for them to return home with the following advice

### General Advice:

- Supervise your child closely for the first 24 hours after their head injury
- Observe your child closely for the next 2-3 days. Check that their behaviour is normal for them
- If your child is in pain, give them pain medications. Always follow the manufacturer instructions for the correct dose.
- Make sure your child is drinking enough fluids
- Encourage your child to have plenty of rest
- Avoid stressful environments until they are feeling better
- Stay within easy reach of medical help for 2-3 days
- Discuss with your child's doctor about returning to contact sports such as rugby or football
- Avoid TV, computers and mobile phones for at least 24 hours
- Speak with your child's teachers if they still have any symptoms when they return to school

### Sleeping:

It is common for children to want to sleep for a short while after a head injury. This will appear a normal 'peaceful' sleep and they wake up fully after a nap.

If you have a concern, wake the child up after an hour or so. They may be grumpy about waking up but this is reassuring. You can then let them go back to sleep. If you are concerned you can do this a few times during the night. When asleep check that they are breathing normally and sleeping in a normal position.

Drowsiness means that your child cannot be roused and you should contact 999 or go straight to the Emergency Department if you notice your child is drowsy.

### What to Look Out For:

If your child develops any of the following symptoms call 999 or go straight to your nearest Emergency Department

- Drowsiness and you cannot wake them when they would normally be wide awake
- Three or more separate vomiting episodes
- Headache that doesn't improve, or gets worse, even after pain medication
- Confusion or you notice a change in their normal behaviour

## EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

- Difficulty speaking or understanding what you are saying
- Weakness in their arms or legs or loss of balance
- A fit or collapse
- New visual or hearing problems
- Blood or clear fluid leaking from the nose or ear

## Other Symptoms:

Some children develop mild symptoms after a head injury that are not serious and usually settle within 2 weeks.

These symptoms can include:

- Mild headache
- Feeling sick without vomiting (nausea)
- Irritability or bad temper
- Difficulty concentrating
- Poor appetite

If you are worried about any of the symptoms your child is experiencing or they are not improving, you should arrange for your child to see their GP.

## Support Available:

The **NHS website** ([www.nhs.uk](http://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](http://www.headway.org.uk)
- [www.headwayeastsussex.org.uk](http://www.headwayeastsussex.org.uk)
- Helpline: 0808 800 2244

Your child's **GP** can link you to services if you feel your child needs these after their head injury

## 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 4500 Ext: 734731 or by email at: [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.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](mailto:esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net)**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your GP.

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## Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:  
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The directorate group that has agreed this patient information leaflet:  
**URGENT CARE**

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Responsible clinician/author: Emergency Department Consultants

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