

# Head Injury in Children

## Patient information

**You have been given this information leaflet because your child has been diagnosed with a head injury.**

**At this time there is no suggestion that there is a serious injury.**

Head injuries are very common and the majority of children have no concerning features or problems.

Many children may continue to need observation into the following day after a head injury, and this can be done at home with a sensible adult.

### **After a head injury children may have some minor symptoms such as:**

- Increased tiredness – your child may wish to sleep more than usual. This is only concerning if your child is drowsy and difficult to rouse. Children may be allowed to sleep as normal after a head injury.
- Loss of appetite- mild sickness and feeling dizzy is common after a head injury. Ensure your child is drinking plenty of fluids, you do not need to force them to eat.
- Headache – older children may complain of a headache, and younger children may be more unsettled than usual. Calpol should be given regularly as directed on the bottle.
- Changes in behaviour – older children may have trouble concentrating on school work or reading.

Most minor symptoms will settle with regular painkillers and rest from television, computers and intensive reading.

Children should be prevented from returning to contact sports or physical exertion for 24 hours and re-introduced when symptoms have resolved.

### **You should seek medical attention if any of the following occur to your child:**

- Drowsy and difficult to rouse.
- Vomiting more than 3 times.
- Is confused or does not seem to understand what is being said to him/her.
- Has any event that which you may think is a fit (seizure).
- Has a severe ongoing headache despite painkillers.
- Has bleeding or a watery discharge from the nose or ears.
- Crying continuously and cannot be settled, especially in a child under 1 year old.

Emergency Department  
and Minor Injury Unit



## Treating Pain

If needed, painkiller options include the following:

**Paracetamol** is usually recommended for painful sprains or strains.

**Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)** relieve pain and may also limit inflammation and swelling. You can buy some types (eg, ibuprofen) at pharmacies, without a prescription either topically as a cream, or as tablets. You should check the medication advice leaflet to ensure you are safe to take these i.e some patients with asthma or stomach ulcers may not be able to.

If this does not help, you may need an additional stronger painkiller – such as codeine – you should discuss this with your pharmacist or GP.

## Further Information

For further advice and information about your condition:

Please choose from the following:

- 'NHS Patient Choices' website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- 'Making Lives Better' patient website: [www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info)
- Telephone NHS 111
- Contact your General Practitioner

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### Contact details:

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Version 1, Issue Date: October 2018, Revision Date: October 2020