

Head Injury

Patient information

You have been given this information leaflet because you or the person you care for 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 people have no concerning features or problems.

Many people 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 some minor symptoms may continue such as:

- Increased tiredness – you may sleep as normal, but it is concerning if you are drowsy.
- Loss of appetite – mild sickness is common after a head injury. Ensure you are drinking plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol.
- Headache – painkillers should be given regularly as directed on the packet.
- Changes in behaviour – you may have difficulty concentrating on tasks such as reading or writing.

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

Driving, operating machinery and making important decision should be limited until symptoms have improved.

Returning to contact sports or physical exertion should be avoided for 24 hours and re-introduced when symptoms have resolved. If you compete in sports with possible head impacts, please discuss returning to this with your doctor.

Further information about symptoms after a head injury can be obtained from www.headway.org.uk

You should seek medical attention if any of the following symptoms occur:

- Drowsy and difficult to rouse.
- Vomiting more than once.
- Confusion or unable to understand what is being said to him / her.

Emergency Department
and Minor Injury Unit



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- Any event that which you may think is a fit.
- A severe ongoing headache despite painkillers.
- Bleeding or a watery discharge from the nose or ears.
- Symptoms that resemble a stroke i.e. weakness or loss of use of the arm / leg / face

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
- 'Making Lives Better' patient website: www.patient.info
- Telephone NHS 111
- Contact your General Practitioner

Contact details:

- The James Cook University Hospital: 01642 850850
Marton Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW
 - The Friarage: 01609 779911
Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL6 1JG
- Redcar Primary Care Hospital: 01642 511000
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Version 1, Issue Date: October 2018, Revision Date: October 2020