

Post Concussion Syndrome

Following your head injury it is felt that you have post- concussion syndrome.

Concussion can be difficult to define and is largely regarded as a collection of symptoms following a head injury.



These include:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Sensitivity to light / noises
- Poor sleep
- Memory difficulties
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritable mood
- Low mood / tearful / anxiety
- Fatigue

Generally a person with a concussion syndrome will develop a combination of these symptoms within a couple of days of their head injury. It can however be very difficult to predict how long these symptoms will last for and how severe they will be.

Most people make a full, quick recovery within a few days or weeks. However a proportion can experience issues for several months or longer. This can affect the concussed person's life in many ways:

- It can be difficult to maintain your prior performance at work/school due to concentration, problem solving or fatigue.
- Relationships can become affected through changes in your mood. Fatigue and memory problems can make it harder to interact.

If you are experiencing any of these post-concussion symptoms or work/school/relationship problems more than 2 weeks following your head injury you should see your GP.

Do:

- Have plenty of rest
- Sleep if you feel tired
- Take analgesia for headaches

Don't:

- Drink alcohol
- Drive/operate machinery until you have recovered
- Return to work/school until you feel able
- Take aspirin/sleep tablets without your doctor's advice
- Return to contact sport straight away

continued over the page

**Emergency Department
and Minor Injury Unit**
Patient information

It is important following a head injury that you do not sustain a further head injury within the next few weeks, or until you are symptom free if longer than a few weeks. **It is therefore advised that you avoid sports / situations where it is possible you could sustain another head injury.** Second Impact Syndrome (although rare) can be very serious.

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
West Dyke Road, Redcar, TS10 4NW

To ensure we meet your communication needs please inform the Patient Experience Department of any special requirements, i.e. Braille/ Large Print.

T: 01642 835964

E: stees.patient.experience@nhs.net

The James Cook University Hospital,
Marton Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW. Tel: 01642 850850

Author: Emergency Department and Minor Injury Unit
Issue Date: March 2021 Review Date: March 2023

ST1615