

Discharge advice following a head injury

Information and advice for parents and carers

Paediatrics

Your child has had a head injury but we feel it is safe for you to take them home. We have checked their symptoms and believe that he/she will recover and is unlikely to have any further problems. However, please observe your child closely over the next 48 hours and do not leave them alone at home.

What do I need to look out for?

If you notice any of the following symptoms take your child to the nearest A&E as soon as possible as they may have developed a complication:

- Unconsciousness or lack of full consciousness (e.g. unable to keep their eyes open)
- Difficulty in waking them up
- Appearing confused (e.g. doesn't know where they are, muddled up thinking)
- Bad headache that doesn't go away
- Vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Weakness of any limb or difficulty walking
- Fitting (abnormal movements of the limbs, passes out suddenly)
- Clear fluid coming out of the nose or ears
- Problems with eyesight
- New deafness in one or both ears
- Bleeding from one or both ears

Caring for your child following a head injury

Your child may need to have some time away from games, school and physical activities so that they can rest. Encourage them to have plenty of rest and avoid giving sedative medicines unless they have been prescribed by a doctor.

They may also need to take painkillers such as paracetamol for a few days after their head injury. Do not exceed the dose stated on the bottle and make sure you read the manufacturers leaflet that comes with the medicine before giving it.

Things you shouldn't worry about

You child may experience the following symptoms for a short time following their head injury:

- Mild headache
- Feeling slightly sick
- Problems in going to sleep
- Difficulties in concentration and memory

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- Lack of appetite
- Tiredness

You do not need to worry about these symptoms unless they do not go away, in which case you should contact your GP.

Are there any delayed complications of a head injury?

Usually children recover quickly from their injury and do not experience any long-term problems. Very occasionally, some children develop complications over the weeks and months after their head injury. If you are worried about any symptoms your child has please contact your GP as soon as possible for advice.

Further information

For health information and advice 24 hours a day you can contact:

NHS Direct
0845 46 47

For more information about head injuries please see:

NHS Choices
www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-injury-minor

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our website:

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust
www.swbh.nhs.uk

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, CG56 'Head injury: triage, assessment, investigation and early management of head injury in infants, children and adults', September 2007

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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