

Head injury in a child

Emergency Department Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for the parent/carer of a child who has had a head injury. The healthcare practitioner has assessed your child and has found no signs of serious injury. Therefore your child is now able to go home.

How should I care for my child at home?

- Make sure your child is not alone for 48 hours after the injury. You need to observe them closely to monitor whether their symptoms change or get worse.
- Give them plenty of rest and avoid stressful situations.
- If necessary, give your child a painkilling medicine such as paracetamol, if your child can take it (always read the label; do not exceed the recommended dose).
- Do not let your child get too excited.
- If your child lost consciousness when they injured their head, do not let them play contact sports, such as football or rugby, for at least three weeks without talking to your child's GP.
- Make sure they avoid rough play for a few days.
- Your child should stay away from school until they have recovered. Speak to your child's GP if you are not sure.

What should I look out for at home?

If your child gets any of the following symptoms, you should go to the **nearest Emergency Department (A&E)** without delay:

- unconsciousness, either briefly or for a longer period of time
- difficulty staying awake, or still being sleepy several hours after the injury
- clear fluid leaking from the nose or ears – this could be cerebrospinal fluid which normally surrounds the brain
- bleeding from one or both ears and/or bruising behind one or both ears
- any sign of skull damage
- difficulty speaking, such as slurred speech and/or difficulty understanding what people say
- reading or writing problems
- balance problems or difficulty walking
- loss of power or sensation in part of the body, such as weakness or loss of feeling in an arm or leg
- vision problems, such as significantly blurred or double vision
- having a seizure or fit (when their body suddenly moves uncontrollably)
- memory loss, such as not being able to remember what happened before or after the injury
- a persistent headache
- vomiting (being sick) since the injury
- irritability or unusual behaviour

Other symptoms that may occur

Some children develop mild symptoms after a head injury that are not serious and usually go away within two weeks.

Minor head injuries often cause a bump or bruise. As long as your child is awake (conscious) and with no deep cuts, it is unlikely there will be any serious damage. Other symptoms of a minor head injury may include:

- a mild headache
- nausea (feeling sick)
- mild dizziness
- mild blurred vision

If these symptoms get much worse or if there are other, more serious symptoms, go straight to the **nearest Emergency Department (A&E) or call 999** to request an ambulance.

Preventing head injuries

Although it can be difficult to predict or avoid a head injury, there are some steps you and your child can take to help reduce the risk of more serious injury.

These include:

- wearing a safety helmet when cycling
- reducing hazards in the home that may cause a fall
- ‘childproofing’ the home
- using the correct safety equipment for sport

Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following weblink:

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Head-injury-minor/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please speak to one of our nurses. If you need help when you return home, please contact your GP.

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/accident-emergency/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ، ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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