

# Head injury in an adult

## Emergency Department Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

This leaflet is for people who have been assessed by a healthcare practitioner after a head injury. You have no signs of serious injury and are now able to leave hospital. Please follow the advice in this leaflet.

### What should I do when I get home?

You should have somebody at home with you for the first 48 hours (two days) after leaving hospital. Make sure you have a telephone nearby in case you need help.

We advise that you:

- Have plenty of rest and avoid situations that will make you stressed
- **Do not** have any alcohol or drugs
- **Do not** take sleeping pills, sedatives or tranquilisers unless they are given by a doctor

## When can I return to my normal activities?

- Avoid any contact sports, such as football and rugby, for at least three weeks, unless you have talked to your GP first.
- Do not drive a car or motorbike, ride a bicycle, or operate machinery unless you feel you have completely recovered.

## What should I look out for at home?

If you get any of the following symptoms, go to the **nearest Emergency Department (A&E)** immediately.

- **Unconsciousness or lack of full consciousness** – problems keeping your eyes open.
- **Confusion** – not knowing where you are, getting things muddled up.
- **Drowsiness** (feeling sleepy) that goes on for longer than one hour when you would normally be wide awake.
- **Loss of balance** – problems walking, or any weakness in one or more arms or legs.
- **Blurred vision** – difficulty focusing or you start to see double.
- **A very painful headache** that is not relieved with painkillers such as paracetamol (always read the label; do not exceed the recommended dose).
- **Vomiting** – being sick.
- **Convulsions** (fits).
- **Collapsing** or passing out.
- **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.
- **Deafness** – in one or both ears.

## Other symptoms that may occur

Some people 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 the person 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.

If these problems do not go away after two weeks, you should seek advice from your GP. We would also recommend that you seek a doctor's opinion about your ability to drive a car or motorbike.

## Can I prevent head injury?

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

These include:

- wearing a safety helmet when cycling
- reducing hazards in the home that may cause a fall
- using the correct safety equipment for work, sport and DIY

## 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](mailto: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 broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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