

Head injury in a child

Your child has had an injury to their head. After careful assessment, we feel that it is safe for your child to go home. At home, it is very unlikely that there will be further problems, but below is some advice on managing at home and things to look out for.

For the next 24 hours, you or a responsible adult needs to stay with your child. Your child should also avoid any sport or excessive activity for the first 24 hours.

Things to expect following a head injury

After a head injury, your child may:

- Feel miserable and 'off colour'.
- Be more tired than normal. Do allow your child to sleep as normal, but check on them every few hours.
- Have a headache. Simple children's Paracetamol can be given for this.

Things to look out for

While most head injuries are not serious, there are some things that we would want you to look out for over the next week:

- Worsening of the above symptoms
- Drowsiness or difficulty in waking from sleep
- Appears confused or not understanding what is said
- Vomiting three or more times
- Complaining of severe headache, or trouble with eyesight
- Being irritable, crying more than normal, or being difficult to settle
- Has any attack that could be a fit or seizure
- Clear fluid running from ear or nose
- Weakness in any limb

If any of the above occur, you are advised to contact your doctor or return to the Emergency Department.

Concussion

A small number of children can have symptoms that continue longer following a head injury, such as:

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Feeling sick
- Feeling dazed, or not being able to concentrate
- Blurred vision or ringing in ears
- Sleepiness
- Appearing 'slower' than normal, or seeming easily distracted
- Appearing more emotional

If these are present for over two weeks, your child may be diagnosed with concussion. Concussion is a rare temporary condition that can happen after a head injury. It can affect the brain's normal functioning without any structural change.

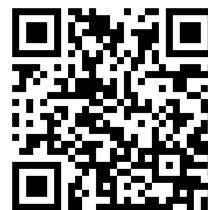
The main management of concussion is rest, and a slow return to normal activity. You should let your child's teacher and sports instructors know if your child has been diagnosed with concussion.

Sport and concussion

After a minimum of 14 days, and after symptoms have settled completely, your child can gradually return to physical activity. This will need to be in a step-wise progression starting with light activity. Contact sports should not be played until at least three weeks after injury.

For a short video with advice on returning to sport after concussion, follow this link or scan the QR code:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qfD-JFf9s&feature=emb_logo



More information about sports and head injury is available at:
www.englandrugby.com/participation/playing/headcase

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Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656 / 826319