

fact sheet

Emergency

Head injury care after discharge

Your child has been assessed in the emergency department after a head injury and has been declared fit for discharge.

Most children with a mild head injury recover very quickly but it's important to closely monitor your child during the next couple of days to look for signs of a more serious head injury.

When to return to hospital

If your child develops any of the following, return to the emergency department for reassessment as soon as possible:

- Severe headache, especially if it becomes progressively worse
- Dizziness or unsteady walking
- Nausea or vomiting
- Unexpected drowsiness or weakness
- Disorientation or confusion
- Irritability or continued crying
- Slurred speech or blurred/double vision
- Seizure

Recovering from a mild head injury

While your child is recovering, ensure they:

- get lots of rest (keep a normal sleep/wake routine)
- eat a healthy diet and drink plenty of fluids
- avoid activities that will make symptoms worse (strenuous physical activity, prolonged periods in front of a computer).

It is important to return to normal activities gradually. If your child returns too quickly, it may slow down their recovery.

Returning to school

Your child should not return to school until all symptoms have settled. It may be a good idea to start with half days at first. Notify your child's school or daycare about the head injury and ask the teacher to monitor your child's performance. Some changes to workload may help your child cope with mental and physical fatigue. You may also want to ask for special considerations for any exams soon after the injury.

Returning to sport

Your child should not return to sports until all symptoms have cleared. Once your child is fit to start sport again, return should be gradual.

Gradual return	Activity
Day 1	Light aerobic exercise —walking, supervised swimming, exercise bikes. No resistance training.
Day 2	Basic sports exercises —running drills, ball skills. No activities that could involve head impact.
Day 3	Non-contact training drills —passing drills, progressive resistance training.
Day 4	Full-contact practice —normal training activities.
Day 5	Return to play —back to normal game play.

Note: If symptoms recur at any stage, return to the previous step.

Follow up

Sometimes a concussion results from a minor head injury. If your child has a concussion they may display some of the following:

- mild headaches which settle with rest and simple pain medication
- mild dizziness
- feeling tired (fatigue)
- difficulty paying attention or remembering things
- feeling emotional or moody

See your GP or return to the emergency department to discuss this further.

Contact us

Lady Cilento Children's Hospital
501 Stanley Street, South Brisbane
t: 07 3068 1111 (hospital switchboard)

In an emergency, always contact 000 for immediate assistance.

 www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au

 www.facebook.com/childrenshealthqld

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All information contained in this sheet has been supplied by qualified professionals as a guideline for care only. Seek medical advice, as appropriate, for concerns regarding your child's health.