

Head injury care after discharge

Your child has been assessed in the emergency department after having a head injury and is safe to go home. Most children with a mild head injury recover 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.

Care at home

For the first **48 hours** after a head injury you should encourage your child to:

- rest (but keep a normal sleep/wake routine)
- eat a healthy diet and drink plenty of fluids
- avoid activities that make symptoms worse.

When should I see a doctor?

See a doctor **as soon as possible** if your child has any of these symptoms:

- severe headache, especially if it is getting worse
- dizziness or unsteady walking
- nausea, vomiting or poor feeding
- unexpected drowsiness or weakness
- disorientation or confusion
- irritability, continued crying or unusual agitation
- slurred speech or blurred/double vision
- seizure (fit).

In an emergency, always call 000 immediately. Otherwise, visit your nearest hospital emergency department.

Returning to school

Let your child's school or day care know about the head injury. For some children with symptoms, it may be a good idea to start with part-days back at school. This may help the child

cope with mental and physical tiredness. Some children may need to ask for special consideration for any exams that take place soon after the head injury.

Returning to sport

Your child can start exercising after a few days of rest. Gradually return to sport starting with light training and building up over several days before returning to a full game. They should not return to competitive sports until all symptoms have settled.

Concussion

Concussion is the medical name for short-term changes in brain function that some children experience after a mild head injury.

If your child has concussion they may have some of these symptoms during recovery:

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

These symptoms will usually settle over time. See a doctor if you're concerned.

Things to remember

- Your child should rest for the first 48 hours after a head injury.
- Keep a close watch on your child for the first couple of days after a head injury.
- See a doctor as soon as possible if your child's symptoms get worse or you notice new symptoms.
- Your child should return to normal activities gradually. Do not return to competitive sport until all symptoms have settled.

In an emergency, always contact 000 for immediate assistance. Otherwise, contact your local doctor or visit your nearest hospital emergency department. For non-urgent medical advice, call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) to speak to a registered nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the cost of a local call.

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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.