

Minor Head Injury (Adult) Advice

This leaflet is intended for people (and for their carers), who have been assessed following a head injury but who have no signs of serious injury and have been discharged home. The following advice should help you to recover:

Things you should do	Things you should not do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you have a responsible adult (relative or friend) with you for the first 48 hours. • Show a relative or friend this advice leaflet so they also know symptoms to look out for. • Stay within easy reach of a telephone and medical help for the next few days. • Have plenty of rest for the first 24/48 hours after your injury and avoid stressful situations. • Take Paracetamol to relieve any mild headache. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink alcohol or take recreational drugs for the next few days. • Take sleeping tablets or sedatives or tranquilisers unless prescribed by a doctor. • Drive, ride a motorcycle or bicycle, operate machinery or return to exercise until you feel completely recovered. • Play contact sports, such as rugby or football, for 3 weeks following a head injury. If you want to do so before this then discuss it with your doctor. • Return to your normal school, college or work activity until you feel you have completely recovered.

Other symptoms that may occur

The symptoms of a minor head injury are usually mild and should disappear in the next 2 weeks. They may include:

- a mild persistent (but not worsening) headache
- mild dizziness
- mild blurred vision
- irritability or bad temper
- tinnitus (Ringing noise)
- problems sleeping
- problems concentrating
- problems with your memory
- tiredness
- lack of appetite
- nausea (feeling sick but without vomiting)

These may develop just as a reaction to a knock on the head and not due to bleeding or serious injury. If you feel very concerned about any of these symptoms in the first few days after discharge, you should go and see your own doctor.

Minor head injury and knocks to the head are common and it is normal to have a mild headache. Following the injury, if the person is conscious (awake), and there is no deep cut or severe head damage, it is unusual for there to be any brain damage. However, sometimes a knock to the head can cause damage to the brain or to a blood vessel next to the brain. A damaged blood vessel may bleed into the brain or, more commonly, into the area between the brain and the skull. This is uncommon, but can be serious as a build-up of blood can cause pressure on the brain – please see over for symptoms and further advice.

If you experience any of the following symptoms (Red Flags) you should return to the nearest hospital Emergency Department (ED) without delay – please do not attend a MIU with these symptoms:

Headache	If a severe headache occurs and is not relieved with simple painkillers.
Blurred vision	If you have problems focussing your vision or start seeing double.
Drowsiness	If you are feeling sleepy / finding it difficult to stay and this goes on for longer than 1 hour when you would normally be wide awake.
Dizziness/ weakness	If you become increasingly dizzy and find it difficult to walk steadily, have problems with your balance or notice weakness in any of your limbs.
Nausea/ vomiting	It is common to feel sick and possibly vomit immediately after a head injury. However, if you vomit after your discharge, you should return to hospital.
Confusion	If you start not knowing where you are, getting things muddled up, behaving strangely, have any problems with understanding or speaking or suffer memory loss.
Convulsions	Also called fits - these are rare but can occur after a head injury.
Unconsciousness	If you lose consciousness or lack of full consciousness (for example, problems keeping eyes open).
Ears/Eyes/Nose	If you have any blood or clear fluid coming out of your ear or nose; begin bleeding from your ear(s) or have new deafness in your ear(s);

Returning to sport

- You should not return to any contact sporting activity (including rugby and football) for at least 3 weeks or until you are completely symptom free.
- Provided that your symptoms do not come back during or after exercise, you may then continue with a gradual increase in exercise until full sporting activity is resumed.
- If symptoms develop at any exercise level then you should rest for 24 hours before attempting them again.

Where any unconsciousness or significant loss of memory (post traumatic amnesia) has occurred there should be no full contact sporting activity within 3 weeks – a medical review by your GP or your professional medical advisor should be undertaken before any full contact activity restarts.

If you are concerned about your progress, or if you have not improved within 10 days, we advise you to contact your GP or return to the nearest Emergency Department (Not Minor injury unit) for assessment

If you are at all concerned about your injury please contact the relevant Emergency Department or Minor Injury Unit (MIU):

Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056

Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073

Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU: 01443 802353 or 802349

Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318

References: <http://cks.nice.org.uk/head-injury#!management>
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg176>

**“This document is available in Welsh /
Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**