

Minor Head Injury (Children) Advice

This leaflet is intended for the carers of children to help you with your child's recovery.

Your child has had a head injury but we feel it is safe for you to take them home. We have checked their symptoms and believe that they will recover and are unlikely to have any further problems. Please observe your child closely over the next 48 hours and do not leave them alone at home.

What can I do to help my child get better?

Things you should do:	Things you shouldn't do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure your child is supervised for the first 48 hours and that the child stays within easy reach of medical help. • Ensure they have plenty of rest and avoid stressful or overly exciting situations • Give them simple pain relief such as Paracetamol • If they have a lump you can use a cold compress– try a bag of ice or frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel • Give them light meals for 1 or 2 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give medicine that might make your child sleepy. Read the label of any medicine you are thinking of giving, or discuss it with your doctor • Allow them to return to school until you feel they have completely recovered • Allow them to play any contact sport such as rugby, netball or football for at least 3 weeks, or until any symptoms have gone, without talking to your doctor first

After a knock, bump or blow to the head, children will often cry, and be distressed. Sit them down, comfort them and they should settle down. It is then quite common for them to want to sleep for a short while - this is quite normal. However, it should be a normal 'peaceful' sleep, and they should wake up fully after a nap. Some parents are afraid to let their children go to sleep if the accident happens just before bedtime - do let them.

Drowsiness means they cannot be roused. If you are concerned, wake the child up after an hour or so. They may be grumpy about being woken up, but that is reassuring. You can then let him or her go back off to sleep again. You can do this a few times during the night if there is particular concern. When asleep, check to see that he or she appears to be breathing normally and is sleeping in a normal position.

What not to worry about?

After a bump to the head it is not unusual for your child to have a mild headache, feel sick (without vomiting), or be slightly dizzy. This is likely to be worse if your child is very active and not resting at all and should improve with rest.

Some children will also be a bit grumpy, not concentrate as well as usual, get tired more easily but not sleep or eat as well as usual.

If you feel very concerned about any of these symptoms in the first few days after discharge, take your child to see your GP or attend the Emergency department at the Grange University Hospital (not a Minor injury unit)

Minor head injury and knocks to the head are common and children are more likely to sustain a minor head injury because they're very active. It is normal to have a mild headache following the injury, but if your child is conscious (awake), and there is no deep cut or large swelling / bruise, 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 over a short time. This is uncommon but can be serious as a build-up of blood can cause pressure on the brain.

What should I look out for?

Headache	If a severe headache occurs and is not relieved with simple painkillers such as Paracetamol, or if a baby, cries constantly for no apparent reason
Blurred vision	If they have problems focussing or start seeing double.
Drowsiness	If they find it difficult to stay awake and lose concentration.
Dizziness/ weakness	If they become increasingly dizzy and find it difficult to walk steadily, have problems with their balance or notice weakness in any of their limbs.
Nausea/ vomiting	It is common to feel sick and possibly vomit immediately after a head injury. However, if they vomit after your discharge from hospital, they should return.
Confusion	Start behaving strangely, have any problems with understanding or speaking.
Convulsions	Also called fits - these are rare but can occur after a head injury.
Unconsciousness	If they lose consciousness
Ears/nose	If they have any clear fluid coming out of the ear or nose, begin bleeding from the ear(s) or have difficulty in hearing.

If your child experiences any of the above symptoms (Red Flags) you should return to the nearest hospital Emergency Department (ED) without delay – please do not attend a MIU with the above symptoms.

If you are concerned about your child, we advise you to contact your GP or attend the Emergency Department at the Grange University Hospital (not a Minor Injury Unit) for assessment

References: Head Injury :: Healthier Together (what0-18.nhs.uk)
<http://cks.nice.org.uk/head-injury#!management>
Overview | Head injury: assessment and early management |
Guidance | NICE

**This document is available in Welsh/
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**