

Head injury - adults

Head injury advice

As you have suffered a head injury today, we need you and your relatives/friends to look after you and look out for the symptoms described in this leaflet until you are fully recovered. If possible, we would prefer another adult to be with you for the first 24-48 hours.

What should I expect after a head injury?

After a head injury it is normal to experience the following symptoms for a few days. These usually settle within two weeks:

- feeling more tired than usual which may make you feel irritable or anxious
- a mild headache
- mild nausea (feeling sick)
- dizziness and difficulty concentrating.

Ensure that you:

- rest - avoid strenuous physical and mental activities. You may find that even watching TV or looking at a screen makes your headache worse initially.
- take simple over the counter medicines such as paracetamol if needed.
- do not have any alcohol or sedative medication (medicine to help you sleep) for at least 48 hours.
- only return to work/college/school when you feel better. You may need to start with a few hours initially and build up your attendance.
- don't return to driving unless you feel you are back to normal.

We suggest that you do not play contact sports for at least three weeks. If you play competitively, please talk to your coach as some sports have regulations (rules) that must be followed.

If you have had a CT scan of your head which showed any bleeding inside your skull, you will need to contact the DVLA before you can drive again.

What do I need to look out for?

Most head injuries do not lead to serious complications but please return to the Emergency Department if you develop any of the following symptoms:

- worsening headache despite simple painkillers
- loss of balance or problems walking
- weakness in arms or legs
- problems with your eyesight (like seeing double)
- vomiting (being sick)
- seizure (also known as fits or convulsions)
- clear fluid or blood coming out of your ear or nose
- new deafness in one or both ears
- confusion or feeling unusually sleepy
- problems understanding or speaking.

Further information on head injuries is available from Headway, a national charity.
www.headway.org.uk

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