

Head Injury

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This briefing sheet aims to supply you with information about your child's head injury following admission to the children's ward. Head injuries are very common in children due to their active nature.

Minor head injury symptoms

- A mild headache
- Nausea (feeling sick)
- Mild dizziness
- Mild blurred vision

These are to be expected and will improve with time. You can allow your child to rest quietly when at home and give Paracetamol and Ibuprofen. You can let your child sleep.

Let them go to bed at the normal time, wake them before you go to bed and then again at about 4am to ensure they respond by answering you / communicating normally.

In some cases symptoms may be more serious and your child will need to be admitted to the children's ward for regular monitoring of their consciousness. This is achieved by assessing their limb movements, verbal response, pupil reaction, breathing, blood pressure and pulse. This is recorded at regular intervals for approximately 24 hours after the head injury. If all observations remain stable overnight your child can be discharged home the next day.

However, in a small number of cases your child may require a CT scan to rule out or diagnose an injury to the brain.

Worrying symptoms include:

- Continual vomiting
- Persistent sleeping
- Increasing irritability or confusion
- Double vision
- Slurred speech

A CT scan shows us a cross section of your child's brain and allows us to see any injured areas. Your child will have to lie still for a short time on a narrow bed that slides into a scanner, which is a little noisy. If your child is very young they may need to be sedated for this so they can stay still enough to get the images required.

A report will be issued by the radiologist and the doctors will then be able to make a plan of care.

If anything is found on the CT scan, the CT pictures are electronically transferred to the Neurosurgical Unit at Addenbrooke's Hospital. Depending upon the extent of injury your child may need to be transferred to another hospital for further treatment and, rarely, may need care on an intensive care unit if their condition is serious enough.

Home Care

After a simple head injury most children do not have any long term problems and can return to normal activities (including school) when they no longer have symptoms.

Watch your child closely for the next two to three days and bring them to your nearest Accident & Emergency Department or call NHS 111 or, in an emergency 999. Symptoms to look out for:

- They have a very bad headache that does not get better after they have taken medicine
- They become more sleepy than usual or they are hard to wake up
- They are sick more than twice
- They find it hard to walk
- They act differently
- Their body or face starts to twitch

Your Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible - talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve it, then ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care.

Before leaving please complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.

Help us transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

OUR VALUES

Collaboration

We work positively with others to achieve shared aims

Accountability

We act with professionalism and integrity, delivering what we commit to, embedding learning when things do not go to plan

Respect

We are anti-discriminatory, treating people fairly and creating a sense of belonging and pride

Empowerment

We speak out when things don't feel right, we are innovative and make changes to support continuous improvement

Support

We are compassionate, listen attentively and are kind to ourselves and each other



The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240