

HEAD INJURIES IN CHILDREN

When to seek help and what to watch out for

Seek medical attention if your child has these symptoms after sustaining a head injury

- ⇒ Any loss of consciousness
- ⇒ Any problems with memory
- ⇒ Persistent headache since injury
- ⇒ Any vomiting since injury
- ⇒ Any previous brain surgery
- ⇒ Current drug or alcohol intoxication
- ⇒ Any history of bleeding or clotting disorders
- ⇒ Anticoagulant therapies such as warfarin
- ⇒ Irritability or altered behaviour e.g. “not themselves”

What might happen at the hospital

Your child will be assessed to determine if there is a need for admission or a head scan

Head scans can help us work out if there has been any bleeding or other significant damage to the head

Some scans are further reviewed by x-ray doctors; in rare cases you may be recalled to the hospital if there is a query about the imaging—normally within 7 days. If you do not hear from us, you can be assured that no further action is necessary.

Advice after discharge from hospital

Some minor symptoms are usual after a head injury. These include tiredness, loss of appetite, headache, slight changes in behaviour. If symptoms persist, please see your GP.

- ⇒ If your child is sleeping normally, check on them every 2-3 hours.
 - ⇒ Do not force them to eat if they do not feel like eating, but do encourage them to drink plenty of fluids
 - ⇒ Give regular calpol as directed for headache. Avoid ibuprofen.
- Older children may have trouble concentrating on school work or reading. Younger children may lose interest in toys. If your child is generally off-colour, try to keep them quiet and rested as much as possible.

The symptoms should gradually subside to normal within a few days. If your child has any of the following, ring NHS 111 for advice.

- ⇒ The child becomes steadily more sleepy and is difficult to rouse
- ⇒ Repeated vomiting (more than 3 times)
- ⇒ Unsettled and irritable (e.g. crying continuously)
- ⇒ New confusion
- ⇒ Seizures or fits
- ⇒ Bleeding or watery discharge from ears

If your child becomes very unwell at any point, please call 999 for an ambulance