

Head injury (adults)

We think that it is all right for you to leave hospital now. We have checked your symptoms and you seem well on the road to recovery. When you get home it is very unlikely that you will have any further problems

What to look out for

But if any of the symptoms do return we suggest you come back, or get someone to take you to your nearest Emergency Department as soon as possible:

- Unconsciousness, or lack of full consciousness (e.g. problems keeping eyes open).
- Any confusion (not knowing where you are, getting things muddled up).
- Any drowsiness (feeling sleepy) that goes on for longer than one hour when you would normally be wide awake.
- Any problems understanding or speaking.
- Any loss of balance or problems walking.
- Any weakness in one or more arms or legs.
- Any problems with your eyesight.
- Very painful headache that will not go away.
- Any vomiting.
- Any fits (collapsing or passing out suddenly).
- Clear fluid coming out of your ear or nose.
- Bleeding from one or both ears.
- New deafness in one or both ears.

Things you shouldn't worry about

You may experience some other symptoms over the next few days, which should disappear in the next two weeks. These include mild headache, feeling sick (without vomiting), dizziness, irritability or bad temper, problems concentrating or problems with your memory, tiredness, lack of appetite or problems sleeping.

If you feel concerned about any of these symptoms in the first few days after discharge, you should go to your GP to talk about them.

If these problems do not go away after two weeks, you should go to see your GP.

We would also recommend that you seek your GP's opinion about your suitability to drive a car or motorbike.

Things that will help you get better

If you follow this advice it should help you get better more quickly and it may help any symptoms you have to go away.

- Do not stay at home alone for the first 48 hours after leaving hospital.
- Do make sure you stay within easy reach of a telephone and medical help.
- Do have plenty of rest and avoid stressful situations.
- Do not take any alcohol or drugs.
- Do not take sleeping pills, sedatives or tranquillisers unless they are given by a doctor.
- Do not play any contact sport (for example rugby or football) for at least three weeks without talking to your GP first.
- Do not return to school, college or work activity until you feel you have completely recovered.
- Do not drive a car, motorbike or bicycle or operate machinery unless you feel you have completely recovered.

Long-term problems

Most people recover quickly from their accident and experience no long-term problems. However, some people only develop problems after a few weeks or months.

If you start to feel that things are not quite right (for example memory problems, not feeling yourself), then please contact your GP as soon as possible so that he/she can make sure that you are recovering properly.

References:

- National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Guideline 56, Sept 2007
- www.patient.co.uk

Tell us your views

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your treatment and care, please speak to a senior member of staff or to the nurse looking after you. The matrons are also available during normal working hours and they welcome your views.

You can also pick up a copy of the Trust leaflet called 'Talk to us', which explains how you can raise concerns or give feedback on your experience at the hospital.

Friends and Family Test

Whatever your experience you can give feedback by answering the Friends & Family test question – *How likely are you to recommend our service to family and friends if they needed similar care or treatment?* - by going online www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/get-in-touch/friends-and-family-survey.htm.

More information is available on the Trust website: www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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