

Head injury (children)

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

What to look out for

if any of the following symptoms return or occur 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 they are, getting things muddled up).
- Any drowsiness (feeling sleepy) that goes on for longer than one hour when they would normally be wide awake.
- Difficulty waking up.
- Any problems understanding or speaking.
- Any loss of balance or problems walking.
- Any weakness in one or more arms or legs.
- Any problems with their eyesight.
- Very painful headache that won't go away with simple pain relief e.g. Calpol.
- Persistent vomiting – more than three times.
- Any fits (collapsing or passing out suddenly).
- Clear fluid coming out of their ear or nose.
- New bleeding from one or both ears.
- New deafness in one or both ears.

Things you shouldn't worry about

Your child 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 very concerned about any of these symptoms in the first few days after discharge, you should take the patient to their doctor. If these problems do not go away after two weeks, you should take the patient to see their GP.

Things that will help them get better

If the patient follows this advice it should help them get better more quickly and it may help any symptoms they have to go away.

- Do have plenty of rest and avoid stressful situations.
- 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 doctor first

Things you should do to make sure the patient is OK

- Do not allow them to return to school until you feel they have completely recovered.
- Do not leave the patient alone in the home for the first 48 hours after leaving hospital.
- Do make sure that there is a nearby telephone and that the patient stays within easy reach of medical help.

Long-term problems

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

If you start to feel that things are not quite right for your child (for example memory problems, not feeling themselves), then please contact your GP as soon as possible so that he/she can make sure the patient is 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

Paediatric Emergency Department

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