

HEAD INJURY ADVICE FOR PATIENTS 12 YEARS AND OVER

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

We think that it is all right for you to leave the hospital now. When you get home it is very unlikely that you will have any further problems. However, if any of the following symptoms do return, we suggest you come back, or get someone to bring you back to your nearest Hospital Emergency Department as soon as possible:

- Unconsciousness or lack of full consciousness (for example, 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 won't go away.
- Any vomiting – getting sick.
- Any fits (collapsing or passing out suddenly).
- Clear fluid coming out of your ear or nose.
- Bleeding from one or more ears.
- New deafness in one or more ears.

Things you shouldn't worry about:

You may feel some other symptoms over the next few days which should disappear in the next 2 weeks. These include a 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 go and see your own doctor. We would also recommend that you seek a doctor's opinion about your ability to drive a car or motorbike.

Things that will help you get better:

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

- 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 stay at home alone for the first 48 hours after leaving hospital.
- DO NOT take any alcohol or drugs.
- DO NOT take sleeping pills, sedatives or tranquilisers unless they are given by a doctor
- DO NOT play any contact sport (for example, rugby or football) for at least 3 weeks without talking to your doctor first.
- DO NOT return to your normal 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 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 example, memory problems, not feeling yourself), then please contact your doctor as soon as possible so that we can check to make sure you are recovering properly.

Useful websites

www.nhs.uk

www.chsft.nhs.uk

Contact details

This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not yet be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this with the clinical staff at the time of your appointment.

Information is based on that available on www.patient.co.uk.

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