



## GOING HOME AFTER A HEAD INJURY - CHILDREN

### Emergency Department

## University Hospital of North Durham

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Your child has suffered a mild head injury and is now fit for discharge home. It is very unlikely that they will have any further problems.

But, **if any of the following symptoms do return**, we suggest you bring them back to their nearest hospital emergency department as soon as possible:

- Unconsciousness, or lack of full consciousness (for example, problems keeping eyes open)
- Drowsiness (feeling sleepy) that goes on for longer than 1 hour when they would normally be wide awake
- Difficulty waking the patient up
- Problems understanding or speaking
- Loss of balance or problems walking
- Weakness in one or more arms or legs
- Problems with your eyesight
- Painful headache that won't go away
- Vomiting (being sick) 3 or more times
- Seizures (also known as convulsions or fits)
- Clear fluid coming out of your ear or nose
- Bleeding from one or both ears.

### Things you shouldn't worry about

Your child may feel some other symptoms over the next few days which should disappear in the next 2 weeks. These include:

- Mild headache
- Feeling sick (without vomiting)
- Dizziness
- Irritability or bad temper
- Problems concentrating
- Problems with your memory
- Tiredness
- Lack of appetite
- Problems sleeping.

These symptoms are commonly known as concussion. If you feel very concerned about any of these symptoms in the first few days after discharge, you should take your child to their doctor. If these problems do not go away after 2 weeks, you should take your child to see their doctor.

## **How to look after your child, and help them get better quickly**

- DO have plenty of rest and avoid stressful situations
- DO make sure that there is a nearby telephone and that your child stays within easy reach of help
- DO NOT leave the patient alone in the home without a responsible adult for the first 24 hours after leaving hospital
- 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 allow them to return to school until you feel they have completely recovered
- DO NOT allow your child to drive a vehicle (including motorbikes), bicycle, or operate any machinery until you feel that they 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 your child (for example, memory problems, not feeling themselves), then please contact their doctor as soon as possible so that we can check to make sure they are recovering properly. You can find further support and information from the Child Brain Injury Trust and the Headway website:

[www.childbraininjurytrust.org.uk/](http://www.childbraininjurytrust.org.uk/)

[www.headway.org.uk/home.aspx](http://www.headway.org.uk/home.aspx)