

## General advice

### Do

- Rest completely at home for at least 24 hours; have a responsible adult with you during this time.
- Take painkillers suggested by your doctor, if needed.
- Take your usual medication but do not take sedatives or tranquilisers.

### Do not

- Drive or operate machinery.
- Do any strenuous activities until you feel fully recovered.
- Drink alcohol or take recreational drugs.
- Take a bath (a shower is safer) for at least 24 hours.
- Play contact sports for 2 weeks following a head injury with concussion symptoms. Follow guidelines for your sport..
- Return to an occupation that involves balance or heights until all symptoms of concussion have resolved..

Reaction times and thinking will often be slower following a head injury and this could put you at risk of further injury.

## Support

- For general medical advice please use the NHS website, the [NHS 111](#) service, walk-in-centres, or your GP.
- The NHS website provides online health information and guidance [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- The NHS 111 phone line offers medical help and advice from trained advisers supported by nurses and paramedics. Available 24 hours a day. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.
- There are walk-in and urgent treatment services at Brighton Station, in Crawley and at Lewes Victoria Hospital. [www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/services/accident-emergency/](http://www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/services/accident-emergency/)
- [Headway](#) is a charity that provides support to patients who have suffered a brain injury and have continuing problems.  
[www.headway.org.uk](http://www.headway.org.uk)  
[www.headwayeastsussex.org.uk](http://www.headwayeastsussex.org.uk)  
[www.headwaywestsussex.org.uk](http://www.headwaywestsussex.org.uk)  
Helpline **0808 800 2244**

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# Adult head injury

Advice for patients seen  
in the Emergency Department

## What to look out for

- You have had a head injury. You have been given a thorough examination and are now considered fit to be discharged.
- Some people who have had a minor head injury later develop problems which occasionally can be serious.
- If you experience any of the following, please visit your nearest Emergency Department:
  - A persistent headache that has not improved with simple painkillers such as paracetamol.
  - You vomit more than once.
  - You develop double vision or other new problems with your eyesight.
  - Clear fluid or new bleeding coming from your ears or nose.
  - Any new problems with your hearing.
  - You have slurred speech or new problems reading, writing or understanding.
  - Any new weakness, clumsiness or heaviness in your arms or legs.
  - Any loss of balance or problems walking.

## For accompanying adults

- If you notice any of the following symptoms or those mentioned in the previous section, please contact your nearest Emergency Department or **NHS 111**:
  - Increased drowsiness when they would normally be wide awake.
  - Abnormal or unusual behaviour, such as aggression or confusion.
  - Fitting.

## When will I recover?

- Often people can feel unwell for a few days after a head injury. You should avoid driving and strenuous or dangerous activities until you feel recovered.
- Common symptoms are:
  - Mild headache
  - Dizziness
  - Poor concentration or short term memory problems
  - Irritability or being easily annoyed
  - Mild nausea, without vomiting
  - Lack of appetite
  - Poor sleep and tiredness.

- If you have any of these symptoms, do not worry because they should clear up in time without any treatment. These symptoms can last for a prolonged time, up to six months although they should not be worsening. If they worsen then you should see your doctor.
- Most patients recover quickly from their accident and experience no long-term problems. However sometimes problems only appear after weeks or months. If you start to feel that things are 'not quite right' - such as memory problems or not feeling your normal self – please see your GP as soon as possible to ensure you are recovering properly.