



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Adult head injury

Accident and emergency

Patient information

## What is this information about?

You have been assessed after a head injury and are well enough to go home. However, some symptoms can develop later and may need urgent attention.

Seek urgent medical help if you experience any of the symptoms mentioned below.

### When to seek out urgent medical help

**Go to your nearest Emergency Department or call 111 if you develop any of the following:**

- A headache that won't go away, even after taking painkillers like paracetamol
- Vomiting more than once
- Double vision, blurred vision, or other new eyesight problems
- Clear fluid or fresh bleeding from your ears or nose
- Any new hearing problems
- Slurred speech or difficulty reading, writing, or understanding
- Weakness, heaviness, or clumsiness in your arms or legs
- Trouble with balance or walking

## How do I look after someone with a head injury?

**Please see medical help if you notice that they:**

- Are very drowsy, unusually sleepy, or difficult to wake
- Show confused, aggressive, or odd behaviour
- Have a seizure or fit.

## When will I recover?

It is normal to feel a bit unwell for a few days after a minor head injury. Most people recover quickly with no lasting effects. Avoid driving or doing anything physically risky until you feel fully better.

### Common symptoms are:

- Mild headache
- Feeling dizzy
- Trouble concentrating or remembering things
- Irritability or feeling more emotional
- Nausea (without vomiting)
- Loss of appetite
- Tiredness and poor sleep.

These symptoms are usually not serious and should improve over time. Symptoms can last for weeks or even months. They should not get worse. If they get worse, speak to your GP.

Sometimes new symptoms only appear after weeks or months. If you notice symptoms developing, such as memory problems or not feeling your normal self, please see your GP as soon as possible.

## General advice

### Do

- ✓ Rest for at least 24 hours
- ✓ Stay with a responsible adult during this time
- ✓ Take painkillers like paracetamol, if needed
- ✓ Continue your regular medications
- ✓ Use a shower instead of a bath for 24 hours.

## Do not

- ✗ Drive or use heavy machinery
- ✗ Do anything strenuous until you're fully better
- ✗ Drink alcohol or take recreational drugs
- ✗ Take sedatives or tranquilizers (unless prescribed)
- ✗ Return to contact sports for at least 2 weeks
- ✗ Return to work involving heights or balance tasks until all symptoms are gone.

## Be aware

Your reaction time and thinking may be slower than usual.  
Be careful, this can increase your risk of another injury.

## Further support

For general medical advice please use the NHS website, the **NHS 111** service, walk-in-centres, or your GP.

The **NHS website** [www.nhs.uk/](http://www.nhs.uk/) provides online health information and guidance.

There are walk-in and urgent treatment services at Brighton Station, Crawley Urgent Treatment Centre, Lewes Victoria Hospital, Horsham Minor Injuries Unit and Bognor Regis War Memorial Hospital.

**Headway** [www.headway.org.uk](http://www.headway.org.uk) is a charity that provides support to patients who have suffered a brain injury and have continuing problems. Their helpline is **0808 800 2244**. Also see: **Headway Sussex** [www.headwaysussex.org.uk](http://www.headwaysussex.org.uk).

This information is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath.

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