

## Trauma Department Patient Information



The Information Standard Certified Member

# Information

If you need this information in large print, easy read, on audiotape or in another language please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)

If you wish to obtain a list of the sources used to develop this information leaflet please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail [patient.info@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.info@dchft.nhs.uk)

Authors: Janine Courtaux & Roxanne Dean  
Role: Trauma Co-ordinator & Staff Nurse  
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## Discharge advice for Adults following a Head Injury

We think that it is alright for you to leave hospital now. We have checked your symptoms and you seem well on the road to recovery. 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 take you to your 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 you would normally be wide awake
- 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)
- 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

You may feel some other symptoms over the next few days which should disappear within 2 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
- 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 to talk about them.

If these problems haven't resolved after 2 weeks, you should go and see your 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 not** stay at home alone for the first 24 hours after leaving hospital
- **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** 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

**Telephone number to call at Dorset County Hospital: 01305 255541**

## Long term problems

Most patients recover within a couple of weeks 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, or not feeling quite yourself), then please contact your doctor as soon as possible so that we can check to make sure you are recovering properly.

Head injury services may contact you in the weeks following your discharge from hospital to check how you are coping after your head injury.

## Sources of advice

If you need to take time off from work or studies or if your symptoms persist then you should contact your GP who may refer you to a specialist at the head injury clinic.

Clinics are held at Dorset County Hospital with:

Dr J Burn  
Consultant in Brain Injury Rehabilitation  
The Dorset Brain Injury Service  
Tel: 01202 448070

There is a branch of the National Head Injury Association, (Headway) in Poole that is available for advice, support and information on the effect of head injury. Contact:

Headway  
Unit 22  
Albany Park  
Cabot lane  
Poole  
[office@headway.dorset.org.uk](mailto:office@headway.dorset.org.uk)

In an emergency please attend your local Accident and Emergency Department or call NHS Direct on 111.

## Acknowledgement

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2014. 'Head Injury', NICE clinical guideline 176. London (available at [www.guidance.nice.org.uk/CG176](http://www.guidance.nice.org.uk/CG176))