

Discharge advice about head injury (people aged over 12years)

Emergency Department
Tel: 01271 322480

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

We think that it is all right 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,

- **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.

Symptoms to watch out for

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:

- any vomiting – being sick
- very painful headache that won't go away
- unconsciousness or lack of full consciousness, even if the person has now recovered
- 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
- any 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 in the next two 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 to talk about them.

If these problems do not go away after two 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** stay well hydrated and take simple pain killers such as paracetamol
- **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 three 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.

How to contact us

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact your GP or the **Emergency Department** on **01271 322480**.

This leaflet was prepared by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, www.nice.gov.uk

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of the staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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