

Following a head injury to a child

Information for parents and carers



Leeds children's
hospital

caring about children

Your child has suffered a head injury and therefore needs to be monitored closely. The majority of children will not experience any additional symptoms and are classed as having a minor head injury.

Some children may have symptoms suggestive of concussion. The term concussion may be used if your child has had a head injury where their head has been moved or hit with force. There is usually a sudden but short-lived loss of mental function.

Concussion is the most common but least serious type of brain injury. Your child may be diagnosed with concussion if there was a loss of consciousness, visual changes, confusion or temporary memory loss at the time of the accident.

Following a head injury

It is very unlikely that your child will have any further problems.

If any of the following symptoms are seen, you should call 111 or bring your child back to the nearest hospital emergency department:

- more sleepy than normal and difficult to wake
- irritable or has a change in behaviour
- weakness or unusual sensation in one or more arms or legs
- Deafness in one or both ears
- double vision or continuous change in vision
- has a fit (unresponsive or shaking episode)
- severe headache that won't go away despite regular pain relief
- vomits (being sick) on three or more separate occasions
- clear fluid coming out of their ear or nose

Recovery and what to do

Your child should be closely monitored for the next 48 hours. If advised by the hospital, you should check up on your child once or twice during the night by waking them to make sure they are rousable. It is important for most children that there is a period of rest. You should encourage your child to rest quietly for at least two days after their head injury. Too much screen time, including Television, hand held devices, computer games and any form of noisy environments should be avoided. If the symptoms have not gone away, your child should not return to any form of contact sport where there is a chance of another head injury.

Other symptoms

Your child may experience symptoms for the next two to three weeks. This is normal after a head injury if there has been a concussion and should not worry you.

Your child may experience:

Mild headaches, fogginess, disrupted sleep pattern, tiredness, poor memory, nervousness or difficulty concentrating e.g. reading, watching television.

Return to school

Your child should be able to return to school quite soon after the injury. You should tell the school about what has happened to your child, and they should follow the same advice as is included in this leaflet. If there are ongoing symptoms, the school should be informed so they can make sure arrangements are put in place for example rest breaks between the lessons, time-out for headaches, extension of homework. Special consideration may need to be given if your child is due to do their exams.

What to do if my child has a confirmed skull fracture

Most fractures will heal without any further problems. If you notice a swelling over the site of the fracture/injury that continues to enlarge beyond two weeks of the injury then your child needs to be seen at the nearest hospital emergency department.

Longer term concerns

Most children recover quickly from their accident and experience no long term problems. In some cases, you may notice that symptoms continue for longer (months rather than weeks). If you start to feel that things are not quite right with your child and if these symptoms persist, you should contact your GP and/or the Head Injury Follow up Service at Leeds Children's Hospital.

Contact: Brain Injury Specialist Telephone: 0113 392 6903

PLEASE NOTE, as part of your follow up care from Leeds Children's Hospital, you **may** be contacted to see how your child is recovering. This is normal and should not worry you. This will only happen if you are referred to the head injury service by the medical team at the hospital.

Useful links

www.nhs.uk/conditions/concussion/pages/introduction.aspx

www.braininjuryhub.co.uk

www.headway.org.uk/search/?Search=Concussion

https://canchild.ca/system/tenon/assets/attachments/000/000/288/original/Concussion_Management_Return_to_School_Guidelines.pdf

https://canchild.ca/system/tenon/assets/attachments/000/000/292/original/Return_To_Activity_Brochure.pdf

**What did you think of your care? Visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft
*Your views matter***

© The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust • 3rd edition (Ver 1)

Developed by: Lauren Macready, Brain Injury Specialist and
Dr Shahzadi Zeb Consultant, Paediatric A&E

Produced by: Medical Illustration Services • MID code: 20221114_012/EP

LN004323
Publication date
11/2022
Review date
11/2024