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## **PATIENT INFORMATION – HEAD INJURY (CHILD)**

Head injuries can range from mild to severe and have a range of symptoms such as:

- a mild headache
- nausea (feeling sick)
- mild dizziness
- mild blurred vision
- concussion – a sudden, but short lived, loss of mental function
- fits or seizures – when the body suddenly moves uncontrollably
- difficulty speaking or staying awake
- problems with the senses, such as loss of hearing or double vision
- repeated vomiting
- blood or clear fluid coming from the ears or nose
- memory loss (amnesia)

### **How has my child's head injury been classed?**

Your child's head injury will have been assessed by your healthcare professionals using the Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS). This is a scale from 3 to 15 that is used to identify how serious the injury is and how severely the brain has been damaged (with 3 being most severe and 15 least severe).

A head injury is usually classed as being moderate if someone has a GCS score of 9-12 or severe if they have a score of eight or lower.

**Your child will need to be closely observed for 48 hours to monitor whether their symptoms change or worsen.**

Your child may cry or be distressed. This is normal and, with attention and reassurance, most children will settle down. However, seek medical assistance if your child continues to be distressed.

Things to look out for:

- Drowsiness (sleepiness) that is unusual for your child or when they should normally be awake
- Vomiting more than once
- Worsening headache that the painkillers don't relieve
- Fits or seizures (Convulsions)
- Weakness in arms or legs
- Irritability that is unusual for your child
- Inconsolable crying
- Blurred vision (be aware that young babies may look at you strangely)
- Poor feeding or loss of appetite
- Blood or a clear fluid leaking from an ear or nose
- Odd behaviour or your child seems to be acting strangely
- Or you have any other concern

Seek medical advice/help if any of the above occur or you are concerned.

## **What can I do to help?**

You can :

- give them painkillers, such as paracetamol\*, if they have a mild headache (always read the manufacturer's instructions and never give aspirin to children under 16 years of age)
- avoid getting them too excited
- do not have too many visitors
- do not let them play contact sports, such as football or rugby for at least three weeks without talking to their doctor
- make sure that they avoid rough play for a few days
- If they still have symptoms two weeks after the head injury, or you are unsure about your child returning to school or sport, see your GP for advice.

If your child is recovering from a severe head injury, you may have also been advised to:

- only give them light meals for the first one to two days
- avoid getting them too excited
- avoid having too many visitors when they return home

### Recovering from a head injury

#### When can my child return to day to day activities?

You should contact your GP if you do not feel your child is back to their usual self after a week or before if you have any concerns.

The following advice should also be followed:

- do not let them play sports until a doctor advises you that it is safe to do so
- do not let them play roughly for a few days
- do not send them to school until they have completely recovered

### Local Services Information

The NHS Direct Wales website allows you to search for local services in your area, such as hospitals and Pharmacy.

[www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/)

Choose the service you require and follow the guidance on how to search.

Your child's head injury today has been classed as :

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#### Further Advice/Instructions

*Please use this section to give the patient specific information e.g. follow up appointments or after care advice.*

You should be seen in the Accident and Emergency Department in \_\_\_\_\_ days

You should make an appointment to see your GP in \_\_\_\_\_ days

### **\*Pain relief advice**

You may have been given some pain relief by the health professionals in the Accident and Emergency Department. If this runs out and you need further pain relief, you can speak to a pharmacist for advice. Some common painkillers are available to buy over the counter, for e.g. paracetamol or ibuprofen. Always follow the instructions on the packet if you are taking these, and seek further advice from the pharmacist should you have any concerns, particularly if it is for a child.

### **Head Injury Support Organisations**

Headway - the brain injury association  
Headway is a charity set up to give help and support to people affected by brain injury.

Tel: 0115 924 0800

Email: [enquiries@headway.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@headway.org.uk)

Website: <http://www.headway.org.uk>

BASIC (Brain & Spinal Injury Centre)

BASIC offers over 30 rehabilitation services to individuals and families that are largely left to cope on their own with the consequences of brain and spinal injury following discharge from hospital.

Tel: 0161 707 6441

Website: <http://www.basiccharity.org.uk>

## HEAD INJURY (CHILD) CONT

### Brain and Spine Foundation

The Brain and Spine Foundation works to help people affected by brain and spine conditions as well as offering information to medical and educational professionals dealing with the effects of brain and spine conditions.

Tel: 020 7793 5900

Email: [info@brainandspine.org.uk](mailto:info@brainandspine.org.uk)

Website: <http://www.brainandspine.org.uk>



If you become unwell or are injured, choose the right NHS service to make sure you get the best treatment. The Choose Well campaign explains what each NHS service does, and when it should be used.

Choosing well means that you and your family will get the best treatment. It also allows busy NHS services to help the people who need them most.

If you are unsure about which option to choose, please call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47 or visit the Choose Well website at [www.choosewellwales.org.uk](http://www.choosewellwales.org.uk)

This information has been produced based on previous information leaflets and the evidence available at the time of publication. It has been clinically reviewed however if you notice anything that needs updating or amending please contact [ppi.team@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:ppi.team@wales.nhs.uk)

If you require this information in another language or format please ask a member of staff.

For further advice or information contact NHS Direct Wales 0845 46 47  
[www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)

