

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.

If you have any concerns call 111 or the Whittington Emergency Department on 020 7288 5100.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or

whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Head Injury

A patient's guide



Suggested written discharge advice card for patients aged over 16 years who have sustained 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 bring you back or go 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 despite taking simple pain relief
- 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 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 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 avoid television, video, screens, computers for the first 24 hrs as this can make nausea and headaches worse
- 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.