

Long Term Problems

Most children recover quickly from a head injury and are back to their normal self and do not develop any long term problems. Some children, however, may develop problems weeks or months after the accident.

If you think things are not quite right (such as continuing poor memory or change in behaviour) please contact your own GP for advice so that your child can be checked over to see if they are recovering properly.

Compliments, comments & complaints

If you'd like to compliment, comment or complain about our service please contact our Customer Services Department:

Customer Services Department

Livewell Southwest
Room AF3, Local Care Centre
200 Mount Gould Road
Plymouth
PL4 7PY

Tel: 01752 435201

Email: customerservicespch@nhs.net

Contact details

The Minor Injuries Units are open every day of the year, including Bank Holidays.

Minor Injuries Unit Cumberland Centre

Damerel Close
Plymouth
PL1 4JZ

Tel: 01752 434390

Opening times: 8:30am - 9pm

Minor Injuries Unit South Hams Hospital

Plymouth Road
Kingsbridge
TQ7 1AT

Tel: 01548 852349

Opening times: 9am - 5pm

Minor Injuries Unit Tavistock Hospital

Spring Hill
Tavistock
PL19 8LD

Tel: 01822 612233

Opening times: 8am - 10pm

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Information & Advice

Child Head Injury

Minor Injuries Unit

Cumberland Centre
South Hams Hospital
Tavistock Hospital

Introduction

A minor head injury and knocks to the head in children are common in the UK with 40 - 50% of injuries sustained by children. Children may be more likely to have a minor head injury because they are more active.

Causes in children

Children sustain a head injuries from falling whilst climbing, from bikes, scooters or rollerblades, from sport or simply falling at home and hitting their head on furniture.

Following the injury, if the child is conscious (awake) and there is no deep cut or severe damage to the head, it is unusual for there to be any damage to the brain.

Minor head injuries should not require treatment. However, be aware you will need to attend your local Accident & Emergency Department if their symptoms change or worsen in the first 48 hours.

What not to worry about

After a bump on the head it is quite common for your child to have a mild headache, feel sick (without vomiting), or be slightly dizzy.

This is likely to be worse if your child is very active and is not resting at all, and should improve with rest. Prolonged periods of watching TV and playing computer games / Wii can make the headaches worse.

Some children will also be a bit grumpy, not concentrating as well as normal, get tired more easily, and not eat as well as they usually do.

However, if any of these symptoms worsen or cause you concern, please either contact your GP or A&E department.

The following are symptoms which may appear after a head injury. Take your child to your local A&E department if:

- They are unusually sleepy or you cannot wake them
- They have a headache that is persistent or is getting worse, despite having taken pain relief
- They are unsteady when walking, dizzy or has a loss of balance
- They have more than 3 episodes of vomiting
- They have a fit
- They develop any problems with their vision (such as a squint or blurred vision, or they start to see double)
- They have blood or clear fluid leaking from their nose or ears
- They have confusion (not knowing where they are, getting things muddled up) or any problems understanding or speaking
- They have new deafness in one or both ears.

A note about sleeping

After a knock on the head, children often cry, be distressed and settle down. It is quite common for them to want to sleep for a short while. This is normal.

However, it will appear to be normal 'peaceful' sleep and they wake up fully, like after a nap. Some parents / carers are afraid to let their children go to sleep at bedtime. Do let them. We do **NOT** recommend waking your child at night after a minor head injury.

What can I do to help my child get better?

- Give your child regular pain relief (such as paracetamol) if they have a mild headache
- Give your child light meals for the first couple of days
- Ensure your child has plenty of rest
- Avoid getting your child too excited and stressful and keep visitors to a minimum
- School-age children should not return to school until completely better
- Your child should avoid contact sports for at least 3 weeks unless advised by a doctor
- Ensure your child avoids rough play for a few days
- Avoid activities requiring high concentration (such as using a computer or Wii / Xbox or Playstation / hand held console) for 48 hours then limit to short periods for one week. Watching TV should be limited for a few days.