

Mild Head Injury Discharge Advice

You have a mild head injury. Mild head injury is also called concussion. Doctors have not detected signs of a serious head injury, and you are able to go home with someone looking after you. There is a small risk of serious problems after a mild head injury, which is why you need an adult to watch you for the next 24 hours and bring you to hospital if needed. Following a mild head injury, it is normal to experience some problems, known as post concussive symptoms, for up to a few weeks. See the back of this page for more information.

After leaving hospital



You should rest for the next 24 hours. It is OK for you to sleep, but you should be woken every 4 hours to make sure you are all right.



You should not drive for 24 hours after a mild head injury. This is a legal requirement across Australia.



You should not drink alcohol or use recreational drugs for the next 48 hours. They may make you feel worse, or hide the problems listed below. Drinking alcohol can put you at risk of another injury to your head.



It is OK to take paracetamol or codeine if you have a headache. Do not take aspirin or an anti-inflammatory painkiller such as Nurofen (Ibuprofen) as this can increase the risk of bleeding.

You should come back to hospital straight away if you have any of the following problems:

- Confusion, unusual behaviour or irritability
- Drowsiness that is not normal for you
- Severe headache
- Vomiting
- Unsteady walking or clumsiness
- Blurry vision or slurred speech
- Fitting or seizures

If you are worried phone Health Direct on 1800 022 222 or return to the Emergency Department.

The next few weeks: Post Concussive Symptoms

Some people experience problems after a mild head injury, these are called post concussive symptoms. Usually these problems settle within the first few weeks.

You might have dizziness, tiredness, difficulties with concentration and memory, irritability, mild changes to your behaviour, mild headache, and mild nausea.

Ways to help yourself recover



It is important to get enough sleep and rest to allow your brain to recover. Do not stay in bed all the time however, as activity is also important to recovery.



You may find you feel more irritable and get annoyed at other people. If you find this is happening a quiet place, rest or physical activity may help. Be aware that your friends and family know you best and may be able to identify that you are not your usual self.



You can return to work if you are not having persistent headaches or dizziness. You must consider things such as if you work in a noisy environment, or operate machinery, when deciding if you are ready to return to work.



You must avoid having another knock to the head. This means avoiding contact sports and other high-risk activities such as climbing ladders, or riding a bike with no helmet.



Alcohol and recreational drugs will make these problems worse, and put you at risk of another head injury. You must not have alcohol or recreational drugs while you have post concussive symptoms.



You need to feel confident your concentration and fatigue are OK before you return to driving. You must not drive a vehicle while you are experiencing problems due to your mild head injury.

Further advice

If you are worried about your recovery, or are having trouble returning to your normal daily activities, please contact Occupational Therapy for follow up assessment and advice. Phone **08 8922 6412**, and ask to speak to the **Trauma Occupational Therapist**. Office hours are 8.00am to 4.20pm. If the phone is not answered, please leave a message.

If you need ongoing help, you will be referred for outpatient follow up at the Royal Darwin Hospital Head Injury Clinic with a doctor who specialises in head injury and rehabilitation.

REMEMBER: If you have any of the problems on the first page, return to the Emergency Department.