

# MINOR HEAD INJURY

**Minor head injuries are common in people of all ages and rarely result in any permanent brain damage.**

If your child experiences a knock, bump or blow to the head, sit them down, comfort them, and make sure they rest. You can hold a cold compress to their head try a bag of ice or frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel.

The symptoms of a minor head injury are usually mild and short-lived. They may include:

- a mild headache
- nausea (feeling sick)
- mild dizziness
- mild blurred vision

If your child's symptoms get significantly worse, take them straight to the accident and emergency (A&E) department of your nearest hospital or call 999 for an ambulance.

## WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Signs of a brain injury after a head injury include:

- **unconsciousness** either brief (concussion) or for a longer period of time
- **fits or seizures**
- **problems with the senses** such as hearing loss or double vision
- **repeated vomiting**
- **blood or clear fluid coming from the ears or nose**
- **memory loss** (amnesia)

If any of these symptoms occur after a head injury, immediately go to your nearest A&E department or call 999 and ask for an ambulance.

## HOW COMMON ARE HEAD INJURIES?

Each year around 700,000 people attend A&E departments with a head injury in England and Wales. Of these, more than 80% only have a minor injury.

The most common causes of head injuries are falls, assaults, and road traffic collisions.

Children are more likely to sustain a minor head injury because they're very active.

## TREATING A MINOR HEAD INJURY

Most people who attend hospital with a minor head injury are allowed to return home shortly afterwards

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Wilberforce Health Centre,  
6-10 Story St, Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire HU1 3SA  
Registered Charity Number: 1164620



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and will make a full recovery within a few days.

After attending hospital with a minor head injury, you'll usually be discharged fairly soon and be able to recover at home. Most people will make a full recovery in a few days.

For the first 24 hours after the injury, it's important for someone to stay with the injured person to keep an eye out for any new symptoms that develop.

It's also important to rest, avoid aggravating the injury with stressful situations, and avoid contact sports until fully recovered.

Mild headaches can be treated with paracetamol, but always read the manufacturer's instructions to ensure the correct dosage is taken. Don't give aspirin to children under the age of 16.

## PREVENTING HEAD INJURIES

It can be difficult to predict or avoid a head injury, but there are some steps you can take to help reduce the risk of more serious injury. These include:

- wearing a safety helmet when cycling
- reducing hazards in the home that may cause a fall
- childproofing your home
- using the correct safety equipment for work, sport and DIY

## TREATING A MINOR HEAD INJURY

**You can usually recover from a minor head injury at home but keep an eye out for any new symptoms that might develop.**

If your child experiences a knock, bump or blow to the head, sit them down, comfort them, and make sure they rest. You can hold a cold compress to their head - try a bag of ice or frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel.

Seek immediate medical advice if symptoms such as mild dizziness and a headache get worse.

Read more about when you need to seek urgent medical attention.

## ADVICE FOR ADULTS

If you have a minor head injury:

- ask someone to stay with you and keep within easy reach of a telephone and medical help for the first 48 hours after the injury
- have plenty of rest and avoid stressful situations
- don't drink alcohol or take recreational drugs
- don't take sleeping pills, sedatives or tranquillisers (unless they're prescribed by your doctor)
- take paracetamol if you have a mild headache, but avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen and aspirin, unless advised or prescribed by a doctor

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- don't play contact sport, such as football or rugby, for at least three weeks without talking to your doctor
- don't return to work, college or school until you've completely recovered and feel ready
- don't drive a car, motorbike or bicycle or operate machinery until you've completely recovered

## WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION

Go to your nearest accident and emergency (A&E) department if you develop any of the symptoms listed above.

See your GP for advice if you still have symptoms two weeks after the head injury or you're unsure about driving or returning to work.

## ADVICE FOR CHILDREN

If your child has a minor head injury:

- give them paracetamol if they have a mild headache, but avoid NSAIDs such as ibuprofen and aspirin (aspirin should never be given to children under the age of 16)
- avoid getting them too excited
- don't have too many visitors
- don't let them play contact sports, such as football or rugby, for at least three weeks without talking to your doctor
- make sure they avoid rough play for a few days

## WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION

Take your child to A&E if their symptoms worsen or they develop any new symptoms.

See your GP for advice if your child still has symptoms two weeks after the head injury, or you're unsure about them returning to school or sport.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### BRAIN AND SPINE FOUNDATION

3.36 Canterbury Court, Kennington Park, 1-3 Brixton Road, London, SW9 6DE

Tel : 0808 808 1000

[www.brainandspine.org.uk](http://www.brainandspine.org.uk)

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