

Emergency department

Head injury advice

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Head injury advice for adults – 18 years+

Introduction

As you have suffered a head injury today we need you and your relatives / friends to look after you and look out for the symptoms described in this leaflet until you are fully recovered.

What to expect

You may find you experience the following:

- mild headaches and an increased need to sleep - this is common after a head injury
- mild nausea (feeling sick) and dizziness

What to do

It is vital that you rest. If you do not take mental and physical rest your recovery will be delayed:

- physical rest means avoiding strenuous activity
- mental rest means not driving, reading, using the computer or internet, watching television

Please do not return to work, college or school until your symptoms have improved.

How can I take care of myself until I get better?

Please follow this advice to support your recovery:

- you may take simple over the counter painkillers like paracetamol for headaches
- do not have any alcohol or take any sedatives (medicine to help you sleep) for at least 48 hours
- be careful to avoid further head injury
- visit your GP if you have any concerns or if your symptoms last more than two weeks

When and how to return to normal life:

- only return to work, college or school when symptoms like headaches, sleepiness, nausea and dizziness have disappeared
- start with a few hours / half days initially and build-up your attendance

Return to sport

You may only return to playing or doing sport:

- when you have returned to work, college or school without any of the symptoms listed on page 1
- by following a graduated return under the direction of your GP or team doctor

If you continue to feel unwell and have any concerns please contact your GP or NHS 111 for advice.

If you develop any of the following symptoms please come back to A&E immediately:

- sleepiness during normal waking hours / inability to wake from sleep
- worsening headache (despite painkillers)
- weakness, numbness or decrease in coordination and balance
- being sick repeatedly or continued nausea
- slurred speech, difficulty speaking or understanding
- confusion, restlessness or agitation
- loss of consciousness
- convulsions
- deafness in one or both ears
- change to vision
- dizziness
- neck stiffness

Useful emergency contacts

St Mary's Hospital's emergency department

South Wharf Road
London W2 1NY
Telephone 020 3312 6330

Charing Cross Hospital's emergency department

Fulham Palace Road
London W6 8RF
Telephone 020 3311 1005

Hammersmith Hospital's emergency department

Du Cane Road
London W12 0HS
Telephone 020 3313 4691

Eye emergencies (24-hour)

Western Eye Hospital
171 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5YE
Telephone 020 3312 3241

NHS 111

If you have an urgent medical problem and are not sure what to do, call 111 and speak to a fully trained adviser. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Alcohol liaison nurses

Charing Cross and Hammersmith hospitals: 020 3313 0244

St Mary's Hospital: 020 3312 7663

Drinkline

Free helpline: 0300 123 1110 (weekdays 09.00–20.00, weekends 11.00–16.00)

Sexual health clinic

Jefferiss wing

St Mary's Hospital

Praed Street

London W2 1NY

Telephone: 020 3312 1697 (general enquiries)

020 3312 7583 (sexual health and HIV advice)

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at **imperial.pals@nhs.net** The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department

Fourth floor

Salton House

St Mary's Hospital

Praed Street

London W2 1NY

Email: **ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net**

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:

imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

We have a free wi-fi service for basic filtered browsing and a premium wi-fi service (requiring payment) at each of our five hospitals. Look for WiFiSPARK_FREE or WiFiSPARK_PREMIUM