

Head Injury - Concussion

Your doctor has seen you, examined you and in some cases ordered a CT scan following your head injury and has diagnosed you with concussion. What is concussion and what do you need to know?

What is Concussion?

Concussion is a brain injury that may occur after a blow to the head. When there is an injury to the head the brain can be shaken inside the skull causing a momentary disruption to the way that the brain works. This is what causes the symptoms of concussion, such as loss of memory, confusion, vomiting.

Even if you did not lose consciousness or memory around the time of the injury, you can still experience the symptoms of post-concussion syndrome.

What are the symptoms of Post-Concussion Syndrome?

Post-concussion syndrome is a set of symptoms that may include:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness / muzziness / feeling 'spaced out'
- Tiredness
- Finding it difficult to concentrate
- Emotional symptoms
- Difficulty processing information and problem-solving

How long these symptoms last vary from person to person. Most will recover within a week, but sometimes they may last for considerably longer periods of time.

What is the treatment?

There is no specific treatment to speed up recovery from post-concussion syndrome.

Just as you would rest any other part of your body that is injured, your brain needs a rest. This can be helped by:

- Ensuring that you get enough sleep
- Taking time off work/school/university, with a gradual return to normal activities as symptoms begin to settle
- Avoiding alcohol and recreational drugs
- Taking medication for headaches and nausea

Return to Sport following a Head Injury

Following a head injury, it is advised to refrain from strenuous physical exertion for at least 14 days.

It is particularly important to be cautious in adolescents and young adults following a concussion injury as their brains are still developing, and a second head injury before the first has completely recovered can have a significant impact by prolonging symptoms and potential effect on academic performance.

After a period of 14 days, providing you are free of symptoms, a graduated return to sport can begin.

Activities at each level is for 2 days, and if there is no recurrence of symptoms during that time you can proceed to the next level.

Level 1: Light aerobic activities such as walking or stationary cycling, with no resistance exercise or weight-training.

Level 2: Sports-specific exercises such as running on a soft surface, road cycling, gentle swimming.

Level 3: Non-contact participation in sports activities e.g. drills and skills-type training in football and rugby.

Level 4: Full contact training followed by a return to game play 48 hours later if no symptoms have occurred on full contact training.

This schedule ensures that there is a minimum of 3 weeks before full contact sport is resumed following a concussive head injury.

If at any stage during this schedule symptoms are experienced then a full day's rest should be taken (or until symptoms have settled) and the process resumed at the previous level.

If you are unsure or have concerns about return to sport, then please ask your GP to review the situation.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day. If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.

For additional medical advice, if your symptoms or condition worsens:

Contact your GP

NHS 111:

Get help with your symptoms, NHS111:
Information to help you manage your health:

Telephone 111

<https://111.nhs.uk/>
www.nhs.uk

In an emergency telephone 999

Emergency Department (A&E)
Alexandra Hospital
Woodrow Drive
Redditch B98 7UB

Tel: 01527 512030

Minor Injury Unit
Kidderminster Hospital
Bewdley Road
Kidderminster DY11 6RJ

Tel: 01562 513039

Emergency Department (A&E)
Worcestershire Royal Hospital
Charles Hastings Way
Worcester WR5 1DD

Tel: 01905 760743