

Medical Services

Mild head injury advice

Information for patients, carers and their families

Most people recover rapidly following a mild head injury. A few people may suffer from symptoms over a longer period.

There is a small risk of you developing serious complications so you should be watched closely by another adult for 24 hours after the accident. The following information should be read by your support person prior to discharge. It outlines what signs to look out for after a head injury and what you need to do if you have problems.

Warning signs

If the patient shows any of these symptoms or signs after head injury, or you notice them getting worse, take them to the nearest hospital/doctor or telephone an ambulance by dialling '000' immediately.

- Fainting or drowsiness—or you can't wake up them up
- Acting strange, saying things that do not make sense (change in behaviour)
- A constant severe headache or a headache that gets worse
- Vomiting or throwing up more than twice
- Cannot remember new events, recognise people or places (increased confusion)
- Pass out or have a blackout or a seizure (any jerking of the body or limbs)
- Cannot move parts of your body or clumsiness
- Blurred vision or slurred speech
- Continual fluid or bleeding from the ear or nose.

Recovery

You should start to feel better within a few days and be 'back to normal' within about four weeks. See your local doctor if you are not starting to feel better. For queries or advice at any stage call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).

Your doctor will monitor these symptoms and may refer you to a specialist or for community allied health support if you do not improve over four weeks to three months.

What to expect the first 24–48 hours after injury

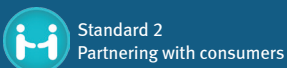
During the first 24–48 hours after injury observe the following:

Warning signs: You should be observed and return to hospital if you develop any of the above warning signs.

- Rest/sleeping: Rest and avoid strenuous activity for at least 24 hours. It is alright for you to sleep tonight but you should be checked every four hours by some-one to make sure you are alright.
- Driving: Do not drive for at least 24 hours. You should not drive until you feel much better and can concentrate properly. Talk to your doctor.
- Drinking/drugs: Do not drink alcohol or take sleeping pills or recreational drugs in the next 48 hours. All of these can make you feel worse. They also make it hard for other people to tell whether the injury is affecting you or not.
- Pain relief: Use paracetamol or paracetamol/codeine for headaches. Do not use aspirin or anti-inflammatory pain reliever such as ibuprofen or naproxen (NSAIDS), which may increase the risk of complications.
- Sports: Do not play sports for at least 24 hours.

The first four weeks after injury

You may have some common effects from the head injury which usually resolve in several weeks to three months. These are called post concussive symptoms (see below). Tiredness can exaggerate the symptoms. Return to your normal activities gradually (not all at



Standard 2
Partnering with consumers



Standard 11
Service delivery



Standard 12
Provision of care



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once) during the first weeks or months. You can help yourself get better by:

- **Rest/sleeping:** Your brain needs time to recover. It is important to get adequate amounts of sleep as you may feel more tired than normal.
- **Driving:** Do not drive or operate machinery until you feel much better and can concentrate properly. Talk to your doctor.
- **Drinking/drugs:** Do not drink alcohol or use recreational drugs until are fully recovered. They will make you feel much worse. Do not take medication unless advised by your doctor.
- **Work/study:** You may need to take time off work or study until you can concentrate better. Most people need a day or two off work but are back full time in less than 2 weeks. How much time you need off work or study will depend on type of job you do. See your doctor and let your employer or teachers know if you are having problems at work or with study. You may need to return to study or work gradually.
- **Sport/lifestyle:** It is dangerous for the brain to be injured again if it has not recovered from the first injury. Talk to your doctor about the steps you need to take to gradually increase sports activity and return to play. If in doubt 'sit it out.'
- **Relationships:** Sometimes your symptoms will affect your relationship with family and friends. You may suffer irritability and mood swings. See your doctor if you or your family are worried.

Post-concussion symptoms

There are common symptoms after a mild head injury. They usually go away within a few days or weeks. Sometimes you may not be aware of them until sometime after your return to work.

- Mild headaches (that won't go away)
- Having more trouble than usual with attention and concentration
- Having more trouble than usual with remembering things (memory difficulties/forgetfulness)
- Feeling dizzy or sick without vomiting (nausea)
- Balance problems
- More difficulty than usual with making decisions and solving problems, getting things done or being organised
- Feeling vague, slowed or 'foggy' thinking
- Feeling more tired than usual and lacking energy (fatigue)
- Mood swings

- Irritability. Losing your temper and getting annoyed easily
- Anxiety or depression
- Mild behavioural change
- More sensitive to sounds or lights
- Change in sleep patterns. Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Reduced tolerance to alcohol.

If you find you are experiencing post concussion symptoms you should visit your G.P. to discuss how to manage these symptoms within your lifestyle.

G.P. follow up

Follow up with a G.P. If you are not feeling 'back to normal' within two to seven days. Options for Sunshine Coast G.P. follow up are as follows:

Practice Details

Own G.P. details:

Nambour Medical Centre
14 Daniel Street, Nambour 4560
Ph: 07 5441 4033
Fax: 07 5441 6896
Mon – Thurs: 8.00am – 6.00pm
Friday: 8.00am – 5.30pm
Saturday: 8.00am – 11.30am

Nambour Clinic Family Medicine
6 Sydney Street, Nambour 4560
Ph: 07 5441 1455
Mon – Fri: 8.00am – 7.00pm
Saturday: 8.00am to 12 midday
Sunday and Public Holidays: 8am to 10am

Warana Medical
1 Main Drive, Warana 4575
Ph: 07 5413 9888
Fax: 07 5413 9800
Monday Wednesday Friday: 8.00am - 5.00pm
Tuesday and Thursday: 8.00am - 6.00pm

Chancellor Park Family Medical Practice
Dr Mark Anderson, Dr Steve Horner
18 University Way, Sippy Downs 4558
Phone: 07 5458 7800
Fax: 07 5458 7888
Mon – Thursday: 8:30am – 5:30pm
Friday: 8am – 5pm
Saturday: 8:30am – 12:30pm

In an emergency, always contact 000 for immediate assistance.