

# MILD HEAD INJURY – AFTER ER VISIT



## About Head Injury

Head injuries can result from falls, motor-vehicle accidents, bicycle accidents, sports injuries, or any blow to the head. Each injury is different and can range from a concussion, or mild injury, to a severe injury. Most people have a good recovery from mild head injuries. Recovery takes time and getting plenty of rest is important.

## What to Expect

It is normal for many people with head injuries to have no memory of the accident or moment of injury. Other symptoms are usually mild and will go away within a day or two but can last longer. These symptoms may include:

- Nausea or Vomiting (throwing-up)
- Feeling dizzy or ringing in the ears
- Headaches
- Drowsiness or sleepiness

## When You Go Home from the ER

A responsible person must pay close attention to you for the next 1-2 days. You should not be left alone for the first 24 hours.

- **You may sleep if you want to, but whoever is watching you should wake you up every 2 hours for the next 24 hours. They should make sure you awaken easily and to check for any symptoms listed in the box below.**
- Vomiting usually goes away in a few hours. When you have not thrown up for at least 2 hours you may drink clear liquids (water, pop or apple juice). If you keep fluids down you may try to eat.
- No alcohol (beer, liquor, or wine) for 48 hours.
- Keep quiet and decrease your activity for the next 24 hours. Do not drive a car, participate in sports activities, or operate machinery until cleared by a doctor.
- Headaches may be constant or frequent for a few days or longer but should gradually improve over time. For headache pain, you may use only plain Tylenol® or acetaminophen (if not allergic), according to package directions for age. **DO NOT** take Aspirin®, Motrin®, or ibuprofen products since these can make bleeding worse. **Call your primary doctor or return to the emergency room for severe, worsening headache that does not improve after taking Tylenol®.**
- Do not take any sedatives, pain medications, or medications that cause sleepiness without your doctor's approval.
- Babies should be watched for irritability, poor feeding and vomiting.

*(continued on back)*

***Have someone Call 911 or bring you back to the Emergency Department if you have any of these symptoms:***

- Unable to wake up or becomes unconscious
- Vomiting (throwing up) more than 2 or 3 times
- Changes in your ability to hear, speak or see
- Stumbling or having difficulty walking
- Weakness, paralysis or uncontrollable twitching of face, arm or leg
- Fits, seizures (convulsions)
- Bleeding or drainage from ears or nose
- Pupils (black center of eyes) that are now different sizes from each other
- Trouble answering simple questions (What day is it? Where are you?)
- Changes in behavior or not able to recognize familiar people or objects

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## MILD HEAD INJURY – AFTER ER CARE (continued)

### Follow Up Care

In some cases the emergency room doctor may advise you to be evaluated by a your primary care physician or a head injury specialist (PM&R doctor). To follow up with a head injury specialist, call the **Associates in PM&R Concussion Clinic** at (734) 712-0050 to make and appointment.

### In the Future

For some patients recovery is slow and they may have delayed symptoms such as headache, irritability, frustration, poor concentration, memory loss, confusion, behavior changes, difficulty sleeping, difficulty performing normal activities and even depression. It is important to seek proper treatment for head injury symptoms. If you have continued or delayed symptoms please call your primary care doctor or the **Associates in PM&R Concussion Clinic** (734) 712-0050 to be evaluated.

### Avoid further head injury

Many head injuries are preventable by taking simple safety measures. It is extremely important to prevent a second head injury while still recovering from a concussion or mild head injury. Do not return to driving or sports activities unless cleared by a doctor.

- **Buckle your seat belt.** Always wear your seatbelt and make sure children are in proper car seats/restraints.
- **Wear a helmet during recreational activities** such as bicycling, skating, riding motorcycles or ATVs, riding horses, snowboarding or skiing.
- **Wear safety equipment while playing competitive sports.** Properly fitting and appropriate safety equipment may protect you from injury while participating in sports such as hockey, football, and martial arts.
- **Avoid falls.** Keep your home well lit and free of situations that might cause you to trip and fall. Falls around the home are the leading cause of head injury for infants, toddlers, and older adults.
- **Protect your children.** Pad sharp countertop or table edges, block off stairways, and keep children from climbing on unsafe or unsteady objects.
- **Wear sensible shoes.** If you're older, wear thinner, hard-soled, flat shoes. Avoid shoes with thick soles that may impair your balance. Avoid high heels, or shoes that are too slippery or too sticky.