Head injuries

> **Please note** – The content on this website is provided for general information only, and should not be treated as a substitute for the medical advice of your own doctor or any other health care professional. If you are feeling unwell, make an appointment to see your GP or contact NHS 111. In an emergency, dial 999.

All head injuries are potentially serious and require a proper assessment because they can result in impaired consciousness. Injuries may be associated with damage to the brain tissue or to blood vessels inside the skull, or with a skull fracture.

A head injury may produce concussion, which is a brief period of unconsciousness followed by complete recovery. Some head injuries may produce compression of the brain, which is life-threatening. It is, therefore, important to be able to recognise possible compression. In particular, a deteriorating level of response.

A head wound should alert you to the risk of deeper, underlying damage, such as a skull fracture, which may be serious. Bleeding inside the skull may also occur and lead to compression. Clear fluid or watery blood leaking from the ear or nose are signs of serious injury.

Minor head injuries

Minor head injuries are common nd should not result in any permanent damage.

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

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

If you experience these mild symptoms after a knock, bump or blow to the head, you won't usually require any specific treatment. However, you should go to your local accident and emergency (A&E) department for a check-up.

If your symptoms significantly worsen or you develop any new symptoms after being discharged, you should return to A&E straight away or call 999 and ask for an ambulance.

Any casualty with an injury to the head should be assumed to have a neck (spinal) injury as well and should be treated accordingly.

Severe head injuries

Severe head injuries require immediate medical attention because there is a risk of potentially serious damage to the brain.

Signs of a severe head injury can include:

- unconsciousness – either brief (concussion) or for a longer period of time
- fits or seizures – when the body suddenly moves uncontrollably
- difficulty speaking or staying awake
- problems with the senses – such as loss of hearing or double vision
- repeated vomiting
- blood or clear fluid coming from the ears or nose
- memory loss (amnesia)

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

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Useful Organisations

Newcastle Urgent Treatment Centre (Westgate Road)

Website: https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/hospitals/westgate-urgent-treatment-centre/

Telephone: 0191 282 3000

Address: Newcastle General Hospital, NE4 6BE

St. John Ambulance Northumbria

Email: countyhq@northumbria.sja.org.uk

Website: www.sja.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 273 7938

Address: St. John House, NE4 9PQ

Newcastle Urgent Treatment Centre (Ponteland Road)

Telephone: 0191 271 9030

Address: Ponteland Road Health Centre, NE5 3AE

Emergency Department – Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI)

Website: https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/services/emergency-department-ae/

Telephone: 0191 233 6161

Address: Queen Victoria Road, NE1 4LP

Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Website: https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk

Telephone: 0191 233 6161

Address: Freeman Hospital, NE7 7DN

Newcastle Urgent Treatment Centre (Molineux Street)

Website: https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/hospitals/molineux-street-urgent-treatment-centre/

Telephone: 0191 213 8566

Address: Molineux Street Urgent Treatment Centre, NE6 1SG

The Neurological Alliance

Email: admin@neural.org.uk

Website: www.neural.org.uk

Telephone: 01923 882590

Address: c/o The British Polio Fellowship , WD18 0FQ

Related Articles

Falls prevention

Introduction to First Aid

Walk-in centres (Urgent Treatment Centres)

Minor Injuries Units

Urgent medical help from NHS 111