

Your child has been discharged from hospital. We have checked their symptoms and they seem well on the road to recovery. When you get home it is very unlikely that they will have any further problems. However, if you do experience any further issues we do advise you bring your child back to their nearest hospital as soon as possible.

What Symptoms Do I Need To Look Out For?

- Unconsciousness or drowsiness (for example, problems keeping their eyes open).
- Difficulty waking your child.
- Any confusion (not knowing where they are, getting things muddled up).
- Any problems understanding or speaking.
- Any loss of balance or problems walking.
- Any weakness in one or more arms or legs.
- Any problems with their eyesight.
- Very painful headache that won't go away.
- Persistent vomiting- getting sick.
- Any fits (collapsing or passing out suddenly).
- Clear fluid coming out of their ears or nose.
- Bleeding from the ears.
- Reduced hearing

What Advice Do I Need?

Fatigue.

- In the early stages of recovery after a brain injury it is expected that your child will be very



tired. In the first few weeks you may notice that your child needs more rest and tires easily from doing even simple tasks.

- Fatigue may lead to headaches so plenty of rest and a good sleep pattern are recommended. This may involve some adjustments to their normal schedule.
- We advise that your child gradually resumes activities so that they can return to a normal lifestyle.
- If your child is very tired you may notice that their behaviour is affected and they may become disruptive or difficult. You may need to limit the level of activity or change activities regularly to avoid this. If changes in their behaviour continues, we encourage you to contact your G.P.

Headaches.

- Your child may experience headaches after their injury. This is not unusual. The frequency and severity of headaches should reduce over time. It is ok for you to give your child regular painkillers such as Calpol and Neurofen to help treat headaches, as per the manufacturer's instruction.
- If you notice that your child's headaches are becoming more frequent or more severe and are not being relieved by the painkillers, you should contact your doctor or return to your local hospital.

Wound.

- Depending on your child's injury they may have a wound. The dressing on the wound is generally left undisturbed unless it requires a dressing change or for the sutures/clips to be removed.
- This is a relatively painless procedure and is

carried out by the nurse caring for your child on the ward. If you have been discharged before the sutures have been removed, you can bring your child to your GP who can remove them. Some patients may have dissolvable sutures to close wounds and these do not need to be removed.

- Commonly children will tend to scratch and pick at their wound. It is important that you try to prevent them from doing this in order to prevent infection at the wound site.
- If you notice that the wound looks larger or redder or if there is any discharge or ooze from the wound you should contact your doctor or G.P.
- You can wash your child's hair with their regular shampoo from the third day after the operation but avoid soaking or rubbing the scar.

Visual Disturbances.

- Depending on the brain injury some children's vision can be affected. Common visual problems can include blurring of vision, nearsightedness or sensitivity to bright lights.
- Most visual problems settle down and improve as the child begins to recover, however some children may have ongoing problems with their vision after injury. If there are any problems detected with vision your child will be referred to the ophthalmologist in the hospital to be assessed. If you notice that your child has any visual problems when you get home, you should contact your doctor or G.P.

Emotions and Behaviours

- Children who have had a brain injury can experience changes in mood and their ability to express their feelings.

- Some children can also become more agitated and irritable than before.
- Many of these changes will improve over time and most children go on to make a full recovery.
- Your doctor and nursing staff will discuss this with you in greater detail if your child is experiencing prolonged behavioural problems. They will also make the appropriate referrals for your child to receive follow on care and rehabilitation.

Memory and Concentration

- You may notice that your child's attention and concentration is shorter and that your child finds it difficult to stay focused on one thing.
- You may also notice that your child has trouble remembering things or that you need to repeat instructions.
- Memory problems can be common after a brain injury and usually improve in the early stages of recovery. Most children will go on to make a full recovery.
- Your doctor and nursing staff will discuss this with you in greater detail if your child is experiencing memory problems.

National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH)

- Depending on the head injury, your child may need to be seen by a doctor from the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) in regard to longer term rehabilitation. This will be discussed with you in greater detail by the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) nurse if applicable.

Things That Will Help Your Child Recover:

- DO NOT leave your child alone in the home for the first 48 hours after leaving hospital.
- DO encourage your child to have plenty of rest and avoid stressful situations.

- DO NOT give your child sleeping pills, sedatives or tranquillisers unless they are given by a doctor.
- DO NOT allow your child to play any contact sports (for example, football) for at least 6 weeks without talking to your doctor first.
- DO NOT allow your child to return to school until you feel they have completely recovered in consultation with your doctor. To begin, your child may have to start back at school for short days and weeks and get periods of rest throughout the day.
- DO update the school on your child's condition and notify them of any potential risks.

Long Term Problems.

Most children recover quickly from their accident and experience no long term problems. However, some children may develop problems a few weeks or months after their head injury. If you feel that things are not quite right with your child (eg. memory problems or changes in their behaviour) then please contact your doctor, St. Raphael's Ward or the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Nurse as soon as possible so that we can check to make sure they are recovering properly.

Contact Details.

Beaumont Hospital: 01 8093000
 St. Raphael's Ward: 01 8092502
 Acquired Brain Injury Nurse: 01 8092913

Headway Ireland.

The National Acquired Brain Injury Association.

National Helpline: 1890 200 278
 Email: info@headwayireland.ie
 Website: www.headwayireland.ie

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Beaumont Hospital
 Neuroscience, ENT
 & Cochlear Implant Directorate.

Patient Information Sheet



Discharge Advice for
 Parents and Carers
 Caring for a Child
 Following a Brain Injury.