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# Head Injury: Advice for Responsible Adults

This leaflet is being given to you because you have been considered a Responsible Adult who can care for your friend / relation who has received a suspected head injury before they arrived in police custody. This person has now been released from custody and the Health Care Professional feels it is safe for them to go home.

We have explained symptoms to the patient that they may have and also other symptoms to watch out for.

They may feel tired, dizzy or sickly after their suspected head injury.

This is likely to settle within a few days but it may take longer (see **“When to Ask for More Help”**).

### **Complications are not always obvious following a head injury.**

- You should look after your friend/relation for the next 48 hours.
- Please read this leaflet: it will tell you how you need to look after your friend or relation and tell you of anything that you need to look out for.

### **When to Ask for More Help**

Most head injuries do not lead to serious complications.

However, you are advised to take your friend/ relation immediately to hospital if he/she shows any of the following:

- x **UNCONSCIOUSNESS or LACK OF FULL CONSCIOUSNESS** (e.g. problems keeping their eyes open)
- x Any **CONFUSION** (not knowing where

they are, getting things muddled up)

- x Any apparent **(DROWSINESS or SLEEPINESS)** which continues for more than 1 hour when they would normally be wide awake
- x **DIFFICULTY WAKING** them up
- x Any **PROBLEMS UNDERSTANDING OR SPEAKING**
- x Any **LOSS OF BALANCE or PROBLEMS WALKING**
- x Any **WEAKNESS** in one or more arms or legs
- x Any **PROBLEMS WITH VISION**
- x **VERY PAINFUL HEADACHE** that won't go away
- x Any **VOMITING**
- x Any **FITS** (collapsing or passing out suddenly)
- x **CLEAR FLUID COMING OUT OF THEIR EAR OR NOSE**
- x **BLEEDING** from one or both ears
- x **NEW DEAFNESS** in one or both ears

When your friend/relative is sleeping, you should arrange to observe him at two-hour intervals to establish:

- ✓ Does he/she appear to be **breathing normally?**
- ✓ Is he/she **sleeping in a normal posture?**
- ✓ Does he/she make the **expected response** when you rouse him/her gently?

**If you cannot satisfy yourself that the patient is sleeping normally, he/ she should be wakened fully to be checked.**

**If you are unsure about anything, please contact your Doctor/GP/Local Accident and Emergency Department immediately.**

**Adapted from Guidance of the  
Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine**

**Our sincere thanks go to the Faculty  
of Forensic and Legal Medicine for  
permission to adapt their current  
guidance.**

