

Primary Care Advice and Guidance

Post head injury symptoms

This advice applies to patients with symptoms in the weeks following a mild head injury, concussion or mild traumatic brain injury. These are very common and most people make a full recovery within 3-6 months.

➔ **In general, these patients do not need a brain scan or referral to neurology clinics.**

Common Symptoms

Physical symptoms

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbance
- Blurred or double vision

Cognitive symptoms

- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory problems
- Difficulties with information problem-solving, communication, information processing, planning and organisation

Emotional symptoms

- Mood swings
- Anxiety and depression
- Apathy
- Irritability and anger
- Feeling disconnected from your body or the world around you ('dissociation')

Headaches and dizziness are particularly common. Headaches may have a migraine-like phenotype, and dizziness may be due to benign paroxysmal positional vertigo, therefore these diagnoses are also worth considering and treating.

Simple measures to help with post head injury symptoms include:

- Ensure plenty of rest and sleep if tired
- Avoid alcohol
- Gradual return to usual activities
- Consider relaxation techniques
- Where possible keep stress levels reduced
- Consider medication;
 1. Analgesia for headache. Try and limit other analgesia to 2 days/week and opiates are best avoided because of the risk of medication overuse headaches
 2. Low dose Amitriptyline could be considered
 3. Medication to help with nausea symptoms if present
 4. An antidepressant if there are symptoms of mood related disorders

Patient advice

A useful patient resource is available at www.headinjurysymptoms.org

Patients can self-refer to the patient charity Headway www.headway.org.uk. They also have a useful patient information leaflet called "Mild head injury and concussion".

<https://www.headway.org.uk/media/8508/hw-booklet-mild-head-injury-2020-web.pdf>