

Head injury symptom tracker – children and young people aged 5-18 years

This checker is aimed at children and young people who have sustained some form of head injury.

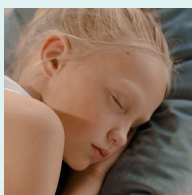
The term mild head injury will be used if you have had an accident where your head has been moved or hit with force. The term concussion is used if there is a sudden but short-lived loss of mental function following an accident – it is the most common but least serious type of brain injury.

Most young people recover quickly from their accident and experience no long-term problems.

Please check the symptoms below that your child may be experiencing, based on changes since the head injury. If you have noticed changes that are not listed that concern you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Physical

- **Sleeping pattern:** Difficulty getting off to sleep, staying asleep, sleeping more.
- **Headaches:** Having more headaches or they are worse than before the accident or illness.
- **Energy levels:** More tired than usual, having more rests at home, finding it hard to get through days at school/college.
- **Mobility:** Change with balance or coordination, bumping into things, a weakness that was not there before.
- **Sensory disturbance:** Not coping in busy environments, sensitivity to light or noise, blurred vision, tinnitus (ringing or buzzing in the ears).



Thinking skills and communication

- **Alertness:** Feeling mentally foggy, appear a little dazed.
- **Attention/concentration:** Finding it hard to focus at home/school, flitting from one thing to another, not able to sit and watch films or stay focused on school/homework.
- **Thinking speed:** Taking longer to take in what others say, or to give an answer to things, taking longer to put things into words, producing less work at school/college.
- **Communication:** Difficulties with word finding, finding it harder to understand instructions, misunderstanding what friends or family members have said, misreading people's cues.



Participation in daily life

- **Friendships:** Difficulty making and keeping friends, more falling out than usual, changes in friendship groups, friends have said something to you about your child not being the same.
- **Leisure activities:** Difficulty accessing the same leisure activities as previously eg Rainbows, Explorers, football.
- **Social activities:** Difficulty coping with parties, not going out as much, not wanting to do anything.
- **School work and learning:** Complaining of not coping, not 'getting' the work, not able to do homework. Not being able to take in new learning. Progress report has been worse at school.
- **Play:** Not playing like usual, may be less imaginative, less focused, and find it difficult to occupy themselves.
- **Motivation/drive to do things:** Not bothered about doing anything, you have to suggest things and often get a refusal to participate.



Behaviour, emotion and wellbeing

- **Irritable:** Seem more irritable than usual, not settling, not as calm as usual.
- **Explosive/less tolerant:** Go from being fine to exploding with nothing in-between, outbursts with no or very little warning, responses to things not being what you would expect given what happened.
- **Tearful:** Easily upset compared with normal, sometimes tearful without knowing why.
- **Emotional:** Feeling worried or anxious, sad or nervous, not wanting to be left alone, getting distressed in situations where you would normally be happy.

