



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Head Injury in Adults: After Your Visit

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

You have had a mild head injury. Often, people cannot remember what happened right before or right after a head injury. Some head injuries can make you pass out, or lose consciousness, for a few seconds or minutes right after the injury.

The doctor carefully checked you and did not find a serious head injury. But a serious problem could develop later. That is why you need to have someone watch you closely for the next 24 hours. Contact your regular doctor to discuss follow-up care.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Have another adult watch you closely for the next 24 hours. That person should check for signs that your head injury is getting worse. (See **When should you call for help?** below for symptoms to look for.)
- Put ice or a cold pack on the sore area for 10 to 15 minutes at a time. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) as directed to relieve pain. Do not take any other medicines, unless your doctor orders them. Many pain medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful.
- You may sleep. If your doctor tells you to, have another adult check you at the suggested times to make sure you are able to wake up, recognize the other adult, and act normally.
- Take it easy for the next few days or longer if you are not feeling well.

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- Do not drink any alcohol for at least the next 24 hours.

What is postconcussion syndrome?

If you have had a mild concussion, you may have a mild headache or just feel "not quite right." These symptoms are common and usually go away on their own over a few days to 4 weeks. Sometimes after a concussion you may feel as if you are not functioning as well as you did before the injury, and you may develop new symptoms. This is called postconcussion syndrome. You may:

- Have changes in your ability to solve problems, think, concentrate, or remember.
- Have headaches.
- Have changes in your sleep patterns, such as not being able to sleep or sleeping all the time.
- Have changes in your personality.
- Lack interest in your daily activities.
- Become easily angered or anxious for no clear reason.
- Have changes in your sex drive.
- Lose your sense of taste or smell.
- Be dizzy, lightheaded, or unsteady and find it hard to stand or walk.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You have twitching, jerking, or a seizure.
- You suddenly cannot walk or stand.
- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You are confused, do not know where you are, or are very sleepy or hard to wake up.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You continue to vomit after 2 hours, or you have new vomiting.
- You have a new watery (not like mucus from a cold) or bloody fluid coming from your nose or ears.
- You have new weakness or numbness in any part of your body.
- You have trouble walking.

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- Your headaches get worse.
- Your vision changes.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Enter X549 in the search box to learn more about **"Head Injury in Adults: After Your Visit"**.

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