

Children's Emergency Department

Neck Injury: Parent-Carer Discharge Information



Necks are often injured during vehicle collisions and other similar incidents. The pain may take up to 24-48 hours to develop fully. Recovery may take from 1-6 weeks depending on the severity of the sprain. An important part of treatment is to maintain or return to normal neck mobility and function as soon as possible, while any injury heals, without waiting for the pain to completely disappear. Movement and exercise will help with stiffness and pain. Medication may be required in order to make this possible. X-rays are often unnecessary in the Emergency Department.

What should I do now?

- Keep the neck moving; swimming is ideal, but other forms of exercise are also beneficial and will strengthen muscles that support your child's spine.
- Make sure your child sits on a straight-backed chair to support their spine. Avoid couches, soft seats and swivel chairs. If possible, use a chair with arm rests.
- Apply warmth to the neck to help warm the muscle.
- Make sure your child's bed has a firm base. Do not sleep on their tummy. When sleeping on your side, use pillows to keep the head & neck in a straight line.
- Encourage your child to perform the following exercises a few times an hour:
 - Look upwards, tilting their head back as far as they can
 - Tilt their head down to touch chin to chest
 - Turn their head to touch their chin to one shoulder then the other
 - Tilt their head to touch one ear to a shoulder, then tilt the other way



Patient Information

What medication can I give to my child/adolescent?

Paracetamol and or Ibuprofen (if applicable) to be given for pain.

Paracetamol 4-6 hourly last given at.....

Ibuprofen 6-8 hourly last given at.....

Return to school/activity

You will need to inform the school/college that your child has sustained a neck injury where their neck may be painful and they may need to refrain from certain activities to rest the neck and ensure complete recovery.

When should I seek medical advice?

- If you notice any tingling, numbness or muscle weakness in your child's limbs
- If your child develops difficulties in passing urine or opening their bowels

For further advice/information:

- Call 111 (24 hours a day)
- Contact your GP
- Contact the Paediatric Department on 024 7696 6934

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6934 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

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