

What do I need to know before I am discharged?

If you are discharged to a specialist rehabilitation hospital, the staff there will be fully informed of your condition and requirements. The neurosurgical team will monitor the patient's progress through outpatients appointments, but if necessary the staff at the rehabilitation hospital can contact them.

If the patient is being discharged home on the day of discharge you will be given three days supply of the required medications, see your local doctor for further medication prescriptions. An appointment will be made for you in either the outpatient's clinic or with your Consultant Neurosurgeon.

When you go home it is important that you get adequate rest. Normal activities may at first seem very difficult, and easing back into things will take time. It is important that you see your local doctor or the nearest Emergency Department if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Any ooze, redness or swelling around your operation site (if you have had an operation)
- Drowsiness or confusion
- Seizures
- Difficulty in talking or walking
- Unrelieved headaches

- Fever
- Sensitivity to light
- Nausea and/or vomiting

You **must not** drive any vehicle or operate machinery until the Neurosurgeon has told you that you may.

Further Information

If you have any questions during your stay please do not hesitate to talk to a member of the nursing staff, who will be only too pleased to try and assist you.

The information in this pamphlet was compiled by:

**The Department of Neurosurgery
Westmead Hospital**

**Clinical Nurse Consultant
Neurosciences
Phone: 9845 9467**

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Understanding the Management of

Head Injury and Post Traumatic Amnesia



A guide for patients and their families

The following pamphlet is designed to provide patients, families and carers with an overview and general information about Head Injury and Post Traumatic Amnesia. This pamphlet is not intended to replace discussion with your doctor, nurse or other members of the health care team.

What is a Head Injury?

A head injury can refer to any injury involving the scalp, skull or the brain. When the term is used it usually refers to an injury of the skull and/or brain which requires medical attention. Head injuries can fall into many different categories, some are minor but others are potentially life threatening.

What is Post Traumatic Amnesia or PTA?

Post traumatic amnesia (PTA) is when there is some temporary brain dysfunction and memory loss of events either prior to or/and after the head injury. People with PTA can sometimes be irritable, confused, have headaches, drowsiness and have difficulty with concentration and walking.

What will happen next?

As head injuries fall into many different categories and range in severity, the care required varies from patient to patient. Some head injuries cause bleeding into or around the brain which is often treated with an operation by a Neurosurgeon. Other injuries such as bruising of the brain and concussion patient's are usually observed in hospital. Often people who sustain a

head injury can have a period of unconsciousness. This can last from minutes, days, weeks and sometimes months. After the patient begins to wake up they will go through a period of PTA. This period also varies from person to person, depending on the severity of the injury.

In the High Dependency Unit, the nurses will regularly assess your condition, and your doctor will review you each morning.

The Occupational Therapist will assess PTA on a daily basis by asking you a set of memory questions. Sometimes the patient may not even recognise their own family and friends during this period so restricting visitors to immediate family only, two at a time and only for short periods may help to relieve confusion and anxiety to the patient.

You will be transferred to the ward when your medical condition has stabilised and you are not requiring continual monitoring. If you need to see our speech therapist, dietician, social worker or pharmacist, the nurses will contact them and tell them of your requirements.

Depending on your progress you may require some rehabilitation at a suitable

rehabilitation hospital or you may require further rehabilitation treatment as an outpatient. The rehabilitation required also varies depending on the severity of the injury and deficits. All decisions will be made in conjunction with you and your family.