



## Head injuries

If you suffer a head injury, do not shrug it off as if it were not important. If someone else suffers a head injury, take care of them.

If you feel ill later, seek medical advice; explain that you have suffered a blow to the head. The effects of the blow to the head may not appear for some days. If you, or someone that you know, suffers such a blow, let others (parents, partner, relatives, friends) know about it and advise them what to do if any of the post-concussion symptoms occur.

Check at 24, 48 and 72 hours after the head injury and go to hospital, or advise them to go to hospital, if any of the post-concussion symptoms occur. If these symptoms appear then the casualty must go to hospital and be formally assessed.

### Symptoms of post-concussion – examples

- Increasing disorientation
- New deafness in one or both ears
- Problems understanding or speaking
- Loss of balance or problems walking
- Blurred or double vision
- Any vomiting
- Bleeding from one or both ears
- Clear fluid coming out of your ears or nose
- Any fits (collapsing or passing out suddenly)
- Drowsiness
- Severe headache not relieved by painkillers such as paracetamol

Collision avoidance requires everyone to ensure that they are in the correct place on the sea and keep a good lookout, particularly directly ahead. It also helps if you are conspicuous – you could wear a bright coloured jacket over your kit in daytime - and make sure that the head torch, if used, is working correctly. Coxswains - if you cannot see ahead then stop and look properly. If you think that you are about to collide then

shout for an emergency stop and shout to the other crew. Practise emergency stops frequently.

**Learn how to do an emergency stop.** The key steps are:-

- Slap the blade flat on the water at hands away
- Raise your hands slowly until the water is half way up the loom
- Rotate the handle towards you SLOWLY until the blade is at 90° to the water
- Keep control of the handle as it comes towards your chest
- Back down if you need to.