

Head Injury

What you should know

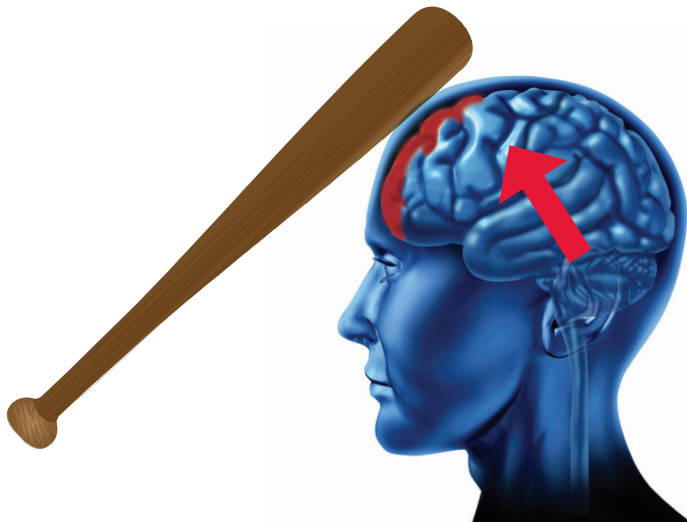


The Department of Surgery sees patients for a wide range of surgical services. These include Colorectal, Endocrine, Breast, Upper GI, Bariatrics, Hepatobiliary, Plastics, Neurosurgery, Urology and Vascular Surgery. Our highly qualified consultants use minimally-invasive surgery and surgical endoscopy for diagnostic and therapeutic interventions in the treatment of these conditions. We provide inpatient and outpatient care with a 24-hour acute surgical service. Day surgery (endoscopy) and minor surgery (lumps and bumps) are also offered at Jurong Medical Centre.

What is a head injury?

A head injury is any injury that causes trauma to the scalp, skull or brain.

It becomes a traumatic brain injury where there is bleeding into the skull. Head injury can be mild or severe and lead to deaths in some cases. When the head experiences a vigorous impact, the superficial skin, skull and the meninges of the brain get damaged and small cuts, bruises or bleeding may occur. Not everyone with a head injury has a brain injury. Likewise, someone with a brain injury may not show obvious injuries on the skin.



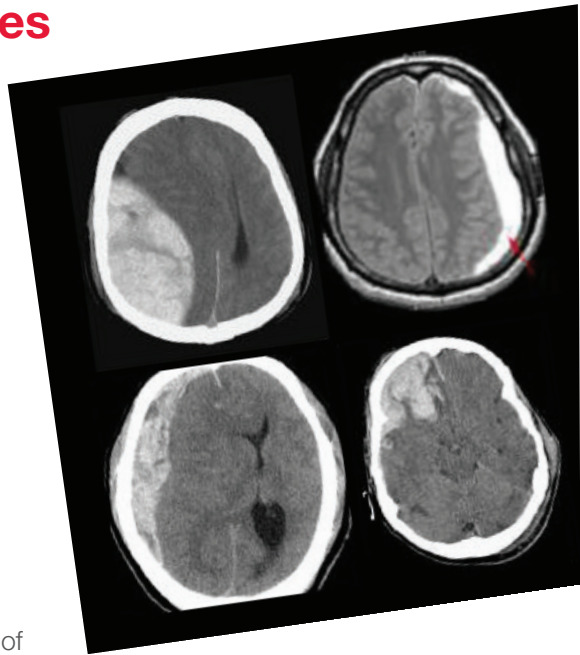
Causes

In Singapore, the most common causes of head injury are traffic accidents, accidents that occur at home or at work, falls, and physical assaults.



Types of head injuries

Head Injury can result from direct impact to the head from blunt or penetrating objects. Sometimes, in the elderly or children, an indirect head jolt or shake may injure the brain. Symptoms vary from mild (temporary and reversible) to severe (long term and damaging) and can affect one's daily function. In some cases, delayed bleeding occur in high-risk patients such as those on blood thinners (aspirin, warfarin, etc), chronic alcoholics, liver disease or undergoing (heparin) dialysis. It is important to notify your doctor of all your previous medications and disease conditions. Blood clots can occur in various layers of the brain and treatment will depend on the extent and size, and decided by the doctor.



What are the symptoms?

- Clear fluids (known as cerebral fluid) may leak from your ears or nose
- Failure to remember what happened during the head injury
- You may experience:
 - Convulsions or seizures
 - Difficulty awaking from sleep
 - Difficulty walking properly
 - Loss of consciousness lasting from several minutes to a few hours
 - Slurred speech
 - Weakness or numbness in your fingers

You may feel:

- Agitated, behave unusually or get confused
- More tired
- Nauseous/vomit often

Do inform your doctor if you experience any or all of the symptoms listed. Some symptoms may last longer than others.



What happens after a head injury?

Your doctor may prescribe a brain scan (CT or MRI) and X-rays after assessing your medical history and performing a thorough examination on you. Further investigations will depend on the extent of your injury. You will also be prescribed medications (painkillers, anti-nausea tablets, etc) and be warded for closer monitoring. Stop taking blood-thinning medication and/or traditional medicine. Food and drinks are not allowed due to possibility of a surgery or persistent nausea. Patients with minor symptoms and a normal CT scan may be discharged after a consultation with the doctor. Some patients require additional scans, tests or an operation to remove a brain clot.

Types of investigations

- Blood investigations
- CT/MRI scan
- X-rays



Post-discharge instructions

- Arrange for someone to stay with you for the next 24 hours
- Avoid alcohol
- Avoid carrying heavy things or engaging in strenuous activities
- Do not consume sedatives or other drugs unless you have been advised by your doctor
- Do not drive yourself home. Get someone to fetch you or take a taxi
- Get plenty of rest
- Take the painkillers prescribed to you if headache persists
- Use icepacks to bring down swells or pain in the injured area



Recovering from a head injury takes time. Avoid contact sports or strenuous activities during this period. It is important to have enough rest/sleep before returning to your normal activities.

When to contact a medical professional?

Please contact our hospital should you develop the following symptoms, notice it worsening or persisting three weeks later:

- Blackouts, dizziness or fainting
- Blood or clear fluid coming out from your ears or nose
- Confusion, slurred speech or unusual behaviour
- Difficulty walking or staggering
- Double or blurred vision
- Drug reaction/rash
- Fever
- Loss of memory
- Neck stiffness or body numbness
- Persistent and severe headaches, nausea or vomiting
- Seizure (fit or spasm of arms, legs or face)
- Unusual tingling sounds in the ear

Where to get help?

- Dial '995'
- Visit a GP
- Go to the Emergency Department



Appointment

Name:

Age:

Appointment Date:

Appointment Time:

Venue:

For more information

Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Jurong Community Hospital

1 Jurong East St 21, Singapore 609606

www.ntfgh.com.sg | www.jch.com.sg

Clinic opening hours

Monday – Friday: 8.30am – 5.30pm

Saturday: 8.30am – 12.30pm (Selected clinics only*)

Dental Clinic: Monday – Thursday: 8.00am – 5.30pm, Friday: 8.00am – 5.00pm

*Please refer to our websites for more details.

General enquiries & appointments

General enquiries line: 6908 2222 (24-hr)

Fax: 6716 5500 | Email: contactus@nuhs.edu.sg

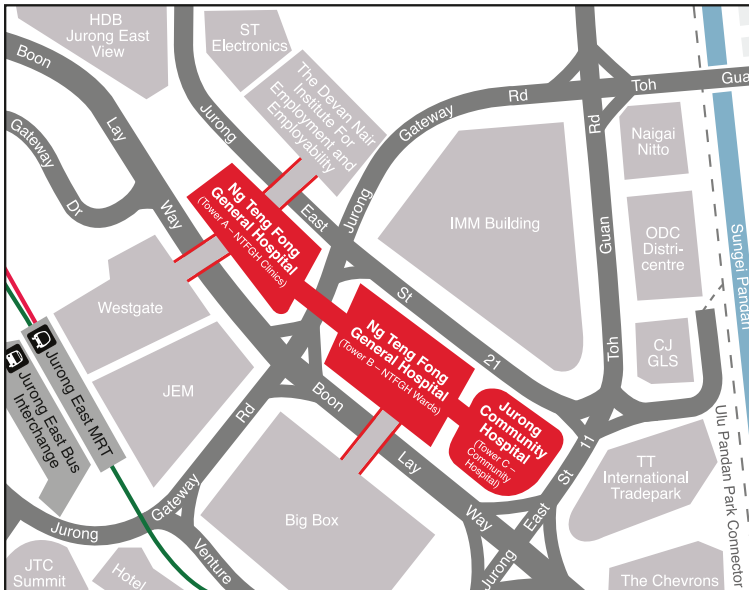
Appointment line: 6908 2222 (Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 5.30pm, Saturday: 8.00am – 12.30pm)

Fax: 6716 2200 | Email: appointment@nuhs.edu.sg

Dental appointment line: 6716 2233 (Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 5.30pm)

Fax: 6716 2200 | Email: JHCampus_Dental@nuhs.edu.sg

Getting there



By train

Alight at Jurong East MRT Station

By bus

Jurong East Bus Interchange

41, 49, 51, 52, 66, 66B, 78, 78A, 79, 79A, 97, 97E, 98, 98M, 105, 143, 143M, 160, 160A, 160M, 183, 183B, 197, 333, 334, 335, 506

Along Boon Lay Way

49, 99, 333, Private bus service 625, 990

Disclaimer:

The information in this brochure is meant for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek your doctor's advice before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition. Information is accurate at the time of printing.