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Friends – old friends and new friends after ABI

Friends are people who you have something in common with and that you spend your time with. You can have lots of fun and friends also help you when things get tough. We make many different friends all through our life and you will find you make different friends as time moves on.

Who do you call a friend at the moment? That can be a tricky question, because since your accident you may feel that you don't have as many friends as you used to. Maybe you have made new friends or maybe you are finding it hard to make friends. Maybe you don't have any friends or maybe you just want to be left alone.

This section will tell you more about making friends.

Old friends

Have a think about who your friends were before you hurt your head? Maybe you had a friend from school or a club? Or maybe you had friends next door or on your street? Did you have a best friend? Who did you used to hang around with at break time?

Did I see my friends in hospital?

Hurting your head can mean that you are in hospital a very long time. This can be very upsetting to your friends and maybe they don't really understand what is happening to you. A lot of it can depend on what their parents have told them and sometimes adults can hide the whole truth because they don't want to upset anyone. Sometimes, your friends might not really know what happened to you at all and have just heard rumours that you aren't very well.

In other cases, maybe your friend was around you when you had your accident or got sick. There is a good chance that they came to see you in hospital. If you were in intensive care you won't remember this because of all the medicine you had to keep you asleep.

Some friends preferred to come and see you when you were less sick on the ward. This is because the ward is a lot less frightening than intensive care but it can still be a scary and unusual place all the same.





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Hospital can be a very scary place and the truth is that sometimes hospitals even scare adults! Maybe your friend wasn't allowed to come and see you in hospital because their parents didn't want them to see you so poorly. There can be lots of reasons as to why you might not have seen your old school friends for a while. Try not to take it personally. Ask your family about your friends and they might be able to tell you things you didn't know.

It is highly unlikely that your friends just stopped thinking about you. Maybe some wanted to come and see you but couldn't for all sorts of reasons.

Old friends are acting strange

Sometimes when you get out of hospital, your old friends might not know how to talk to you. This can be very complicated and there can be all sorts of reasons for this. Try not to worry about it too much, you will make new friends as you go on and your old friends will adjust too.

Things can be different, but with the right support you will make friends over time. It is important to have someone you can talk about your feelings too. If you find your old friends are difficult to talk to, try talking to a parent or a teacher.

New friends at hospital

It sounds strange but hospital can sometimes be a really good place to make friends, especially when you are recovering on the ward. You can make good friends too. You can become really close in hospital because you are all sitting around and waiting to get better.

The hospital ward can be good fun and you may have even found that some of the nurses helped you make friends with other people on the ward. Even your parents may have made friends with other parents and it can be good for them to talk and support each other when you're unwell.

Friends at school

Going back to school can be a difficult. You may find that people you used to call a friend don't seem to really know you or want to play with you anymore. This can be really tough but there are things that can be done to help. There is a special section all about going back to school later and there will be more information for you there.





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Making new friends after an ABI

You may find it harder to make friends since your ABI. This can be frustrating although, there are ways that you can get help if you need it.

Here are some things that can help you make friends at school. It would be a good idea to speak to your parents and teachers so that they can help you with this. The more help you can get from your teachers to begin with the better.

Get the teachers or an educational psychologist to talk to the other children: Sometimes your classmates can find it hard to talk to you because they don't really understand all the things that you have been through, or they don't understand why you might have changed a little bit. All of this confusion can make it hard for them to start talking to you. Ask your teachers or an educational psychologist to explain what is happening to you. This can help your classmates feel less confused and they are more likely to try and be your friend.

Buddy system: Ask the teacher if they can find you a buddy. This is someone who can look out for you and make sure that you are being included by your classmates. Maybe your school has a prefect system or another system where someone volunteers to help other people out in their lunchbreak. This can be a good way of making new friends because your buddy can 'break the ice' for you, which can make it easier for the other children to talk to you.

Circle of friends: This is a new idea that has been set up in some schools after someone with an ABI comes back to school. The teacher finds a group of people at school who will look out for you. It is the same as the buddy system only you have lots of buddies looking out for you. This can be a really good way of meeting people.

