

## Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

### What is Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)?

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a disruption of function in the brain resulting from a blow or jolt to the head or penetrating head injury. Not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI.

The severity of TBI can range from mild, also known as concussion, to severe involving an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia.



It is a major health issue for the military. Unlike other injuries that change appearance, you cannot see a brain injury.

#### Causes of TBI:

- Falls
- Motor vehicle traffic crashes
- Struck by/against events
- Assaults
- Blasts

#### Risk Factors:

- Males have twice the risk as females; highest risk is for males age 15–24
- Contact sports
- Risky behavior such as speeding, not wearing protective equipment etc.

**If you have a known or suspected traumatic brain injury or concussion, seek evaluation from an appropriate health care professional before returning to duty or sports. This fact sheet is not a substitute for a medical evaluation.**

There are various ways to protect yourself and reduce your risk of sustaining a traumatic brain injury:

- Always use safety equipment such as a seat belt or helmet when you operate a motor vehicle.
- Make sure protective equipment is properly fitted and kept in good condition for proper functioning.
- Always use appropriate and fitted protective equipment when playing sports because TBI injuries frequently occur during athletics and physical training.

#### Symptoms of Mild TBI (also called Concussion):

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Excessive fatigue (tiredness)
- Concentration problems
- Forgetfulness (memory problems)
- Irritability
- Sleep problems
- Balance problems
- Ringing in the ears
- Vision changes

#### References:

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center:  
(800) 870-9244 – [www.dvbic.org](http://www.dvbic.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
(800) CDC-INFO – [www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury)

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