



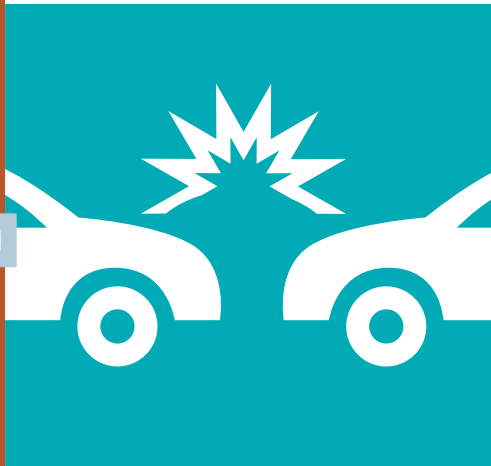
Understanding Traumatic Brain Injury

What is a traumatic brain injury?

A **traumatic brain injury (TBI)** is damage to the brain caused by an outside physical force.



Main causes of TBI include **car crashes, falls, and violence.**



Get Treatment Early

If you experience a fall, a car crash, or any of the causes of TBI, see your doctor **right away!**



Levels of TBI Severity

Severe

Loss of consciousness for **over 24 hours**

Moderate

Loss of consciousness from **30 minutes to 24 hours**

Mild

Brief (**less than 30 minutes**) or no loss of consciousness.

Recovery and Impact

Most mild TBI symptoms resolve within a few hours, days, or months. In the first 6 months after a moderate to severe TBI, people may improve quickly. But they may have permanent changes in their behavior and abilities. These include:



Physical problems

- Problems with balance
- Reduced coordination
- Fatigue
- Problems with sleep



Cognitive problems

- Trouble paying attention, concentrating, and remembering new information
- Becoming confused easily
- Speaking or thinking more slowly



Emotional or behavioral problems

- Irritability and mood swings
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of energy
- More dependent on others

People can learn how to manage the physical, emotional, and behavioral problems caused by TBI. Rehabilitation, therapy, and other supports can help.



Source: Our health information content is based on research evidence and/or professional consensus and has been reviewed and approved by experts from the TBI Model Systems and Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers. The resource has also been reviewed by American Indians with TBI and their family members. **Disclaimer:** This information is not meant to replace the advice of a medical professional. You should consult your health care provider regarding specific medical concerns or treatment. The contents of this resource were developed under grants from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant numbers 90DPKT0008 and 90DPKT0009). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this resource do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, or HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government. **Copyright** © 2025 Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC). May be reproduced and distributed freely with appropriate attribution. Prior permission must be obtained for inclusion in fee-based materials.

