Brain injury, also called acquired brain injury, is any damage to the brain affecting a person physically, emotionally or behaviorally. Brain injuries can happen at birth, or later, from an illness or a trauma, and are called either traumatic or non-traumatic, depending on the specific cause.

**How common is brain injury?**

- They are most common in men between the ages of 15 to 24.
- After a brain injury, survivors are at higher risk (3 to 8 times higher) of having another brain injury.

**The leading causes of TBI are:**

- **47.9%** Falls
- **13.2%** Motor Vehicle
- **13.2%** Unknown/Other
- **8.3%** Assaults
- **17.1%** Struck by/Against

An estimated **1.7 million** people sustain a traumatic brain injury (TBI) each year.

About **5.3 million** Americans are living with a TBI-related disability.

**What is brain injury?**

A brain injury may lead to a wide range of short- or long-term issues affecting:

- **Cognitive Function**
  - Memory
  - Attention
  - Processing Speed
  - Problem-Solving
  - Language
- **Sensation**
  - Hearing
  - Vision
  - Sensation
  - Body Awareness
  - Smell
- **Physical Function**
  - Strength
  - Coordination
  - Balance
  - Swallowing
  - Bowel and Bladder Control
- **Emotion & Behavior**
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Irritability/anger
  - Impulse control
  - Personality changes

**Brain Injury Facts**

The Rancho Los Amigos Levels of Cognitive Functioning-Revised is a 10-point system used to characterize TBI. It measures the levels of awareness, cognition, behavior and interaction with the environment.

**What part of the brain is responsible for what?**

- Movement
- Emotion & Personality
- Speech
- Memory & Learning
- Touch
- Sight
- Balance & Coordination
- Hearing
- Smell

**Brain Map Key**

- Frontal Lobe
- Temporal Lobe
- Parietal Lobe
- Occipital Lobe
- Cerebellum
- Brain Stem
Living with Brain Injury

Injury Prevention
- Remove trip hazards, such as throw rugs.
- Stay healthy and active to reduce your risk of falls.
- Drive sober and distraction free.
- Always wear a seat belt.
- Wear a helmet while riding a bike, skateboard, motorcycle, horse or ATV.
- Wear a helmet while playing contact sports, skiing, skating or snowboarding.

Avoid Alcohol
- Alcohol slows down or stops brain injury recovery.
- Alcohol magnifies some of the cognitive and mood problems caused by brain injury.
- Alcohol lowers the seizure threshold and may trigger seizures.
- Alcohol use increases risk of another brain injury.

Improve Sleep After Brain Injury

**Do:**
- Follow a bedtime routine.
- Establish a regular bed and wake time.
- Have a regular daytime routine.
- Create a restful atmosphere.
- Minimize screen time before bed.

**Don't:**
- Nap more than 20 minutes during the day.
- Eat, read, watch TV or do work while in bed.
- Bring screen time into the bedroom.
- Use caffeine, nicotine, alcohol and sugar for five hours before bedtime.
- Watch the clock.

Talk to your doctor about options to improve your sleep.

For more tips go to: [msktc.org/tbi/factsheets/Sleep-And-Traumatic-Brain-Injury](msktc.org/tbi/factsheets/Sleep-And-Traumatic-Brain-Injury)

Use Organization Tools
Calendars, daily planners, checklists, phone reminders and pill organizers to help stay organized and assist your memory.

Manage Stress

**Stress Management**
- Therapy
- Yoga
- Hobby
- Exercise
- Music
- Nature

Avoid Alcohol

Exercise Regularly
People with TBI who exercise show fewer symptoms of depression, fatigue and cognitive problems. Talk to your providers about an exercise plan that meets your physical needs.

**The Brain Benefits of Exercise**
- Increases production of neurochemicals that promote brain cell repair
- Boosts decision making skills
- Improves memory and attention span
- Prompts growth of new nerve cells and blood vessels
- Improves multi-tasking and planning

For more information go to: [brainline.org/content/2008/07/aerobic-exercise-following-tbi_pageall.html](brainline.org/content/2008/07/aerobic-exercise-following-tbi_pageall.html)

Monitor Mood

- Depression is about eight times more common in the first year after TBI than in the general population (about 50% of people with TBI).
- Seek help! There are many options to help with depression following TBI.

For more information go to: [nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml](nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml)