

## About Brain Injury

### Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

A traumatic brain injury is defined as an alteration in brain function, or other evidence of brain pathology, caused by an external force.

### Typical Causes of TBI

- Falls
- Assault
- Motor Vehicle-Traffic
- Struck by/Against
- Sports Injury

### Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

An acquired brain injury is an injury to the brain, which is not hereditary, congenital, degenerative, or induced by birth trauma. An acquired brain injury is an injury to the brain that has occurred after birth.

### Typical Causes of ABI

- Stroke
- Near Drowning
- Seizure Disorders
- Electric Shock
- Lightning Strike
- Oxygen Deprivation (Hypoxia/Anoxia)
- Substance Abuse
- Infectious Disease
- Tumor
- Toxic Exposure

### Symptoms of Brain Injury

- **Physical Impairments-** speech, vision, hearing, headaches, motor coordination, spasticity of muscles, paresis or paralysis, seizure disorders, balance, and fatigue.
- **Cognitive Impairments-** short term memory deficits, impaired concentration, slowness of thinking, limited attention span, impairments of perception, communication skills, planning, writing, reading, and judgment.
- **Emotional Impairments-** mood swings, self-centeredness, anxiety, depression, lowered self-esteem, sexual dysfunction, restlessness, lack of motivation, and difficulty controlling emotions.

### Tips to Aid Recovery

- If you suspect a head injury, first go to a physician for an exam.
- Get lots of rest. Don't rush back to daily activities such as work or school.
- Avoid doing anything that could cause another blow or jolt to the head.
- Ask your doctor when it's safe to drive a car, ride a bike, or use heavy equipment because your ability to react may be slower after a brain injury.
- Take only the medications your doctor has approved, and don't drink alcohol until your doctor says it's OK.
- Write things down if you have a hard time remembering.
- You may need help to re-learn skills that were lost. Contact the Brain Injury Association in your state to learn more about the programs, supports, and services available to people with brain injury and their families.
- Visit [www.biausa.org](http://www.biausa.org) for resources and support.

### Severity of Brain Injury

Emergency personnel evaluating an individual who recently sustained a brain injury typically assess the severity of a brain injury by using an assessment called the **Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS)**. The scale, which generates a score between 3-15, comprises three tests: eye opening, verbal and motor responses.

*NOTE: There may be no correlation between the initial Glasgow Coma Scale score and the initial level of brain injury and a person's short or long-term recovery or functional abilities.*

