

# Fact Sheet: Traumatic Brain Injury

*March is National Brain Injury Awareness Month*

## What is a traumatic brain injury?

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is caused by a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain. Not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI. The severity of a TBI may range from “mild,” which is a brief change in mental status or consciousness to “severe,” which is an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury.

## What causes TBI?

The causes of TBI vary, but are related to an event that jolts the brain. For example, a TBI could occur as a result of a motor vehicle accident, while playing contact sports, because of a bad fall or during an explosion or blast while deployed. A TBI can occur in both children and adults.

## What are the common signs and symptoms of TBI?

- Headaches or neck pain that does not go away.
- Difficulty remembering, concentrating or making decisions.
- Slowness in thinking, speaking, acting or reading.
- Getting lost or easily confused.
- Feeling tired all of the time, having no energy or motivation.
- Mood changes (feeling sad or angry for no reason).
- Changes in sleep patterns (sleeping a lot more or having a hard time sleeping).
- Light-headedness, dizziness or loss of balance.
- Urge to vomit (nausea).
- Increased sensitivity to lights, sounds or distractions.
- Blurred vision or eyes that tire easily.
- Loss of sense of smell or taste.
- Ringing in the ears.

## What should I do if I think I have a TBI?

Each year, approximately 1.4 million people sustain a TBI in the United States. If you think you have a TBI, contact your local health clinic and make an appointment to see your primary care manager.

## For more information

Information for this fact sheet was taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

