



If you or your loved one has sustained a coma, brain injury, or concussion, please call the **National Brain Injury Information Center (NBIC)** toll-free at 1-800-444-6443 for confidential information, resources, and support.

Toll-Free
1-800-444-6443
National Brain Injury
Information Center



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
- Assaults
- Motor Vehicle Accident
- Struck By/Against
- Sports Injury

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

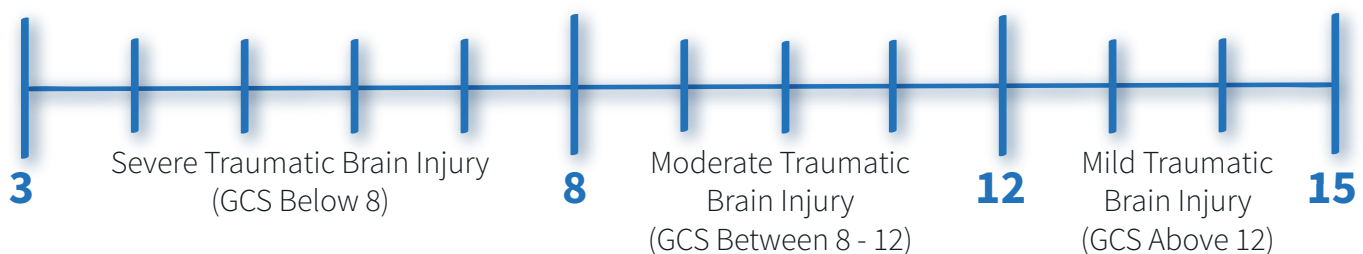
An acquired brain injury is an injury to the brain, which is not hereditary, congenital, degenerative, or induced by birth trauma. An acquired brain injury has occurred after birth.

Typical Causes of ABI

- Stroke
- Near Drowning
- Seizure Disorders
- Electric Shock
- Oxygen Deprivation (Hypoxic/Anoxic)
- Substance Abuse
- Infectious Disease
- Tumor
- Toxic Exposure

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.



Symptoms of Brain Injury

- **Physical Impairments** - Speech, vision, hearing, headaches, motor coordination, muscle spasticity, paresis or paralysis, seizure disorders, balance, and fatigue
- **Cognitive Impairments** - Short-term memory deficits, impaired concentration, slowed thinking, limited attention span, impaired perception, speaking, planning, writing, reading, and judgment
- **Emotional Impairments** - Mood swings, anxiety, depression, lowered self-esteem, sexual dysfunction, restlessness, lack of motivation, self-centeredness, and difficulty controlling emotions

Tips to Aid Recovery

- If you suspect a brain injury, go to a physician or E.R. immediately for an exam
- Get plenty of rest; do not rush back to work or school
- Avoid doing anything that could lead to another blow or jolt to the head
- Ask your doctor when it will be 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
- Speak to your doctor before consuming alcohol
- Write things down if you have trouble with memory
- Visit www.biausa.org for resources and support
- Call the [National Brain Injury Injury Information Center \(NBIIC\)](#) for programs, supports, and services beneficial to you in your area at 1-800-444-6443

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI)

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Definition

A case of mild traumatic brain injury is an occurrence of injury to the head resulting from blunt trauma or acceleration or deceleration forces with one or more of the following conditions attributable to the head injury during the surveillance period:

- Any period of observed or self-reported transient confusion, disorientation, or impaired consciousness
- Any period of observed or self-reported dysfunction of memory (amnesia) around the time of injury
- Observed signs of other neurological or neuropsychological dysfunction
- Any period of observed or self-reported loss of consciousness lasting 30 minutes or less

mTBI Symptoms & Recovery

- The term *mild* refers to the severity of the trauma, not the consequences.
- It is not uncommon for MRI or CT scans to come back as “normal.” This does not mean there is no injury.
- Symptoms do not always present immediately following the injury. They can become apparent hours or even days after the injury.
- The recovery period for each person is different, and it is important to create the best possible environment to heal.
- Listen to your body; if symptoms start to get worse, it is time to stop what you are doing and take a break. Those who attempt to “tough it out” will only prolong their recovery times.
- The recovery process is uneven. You can have a day where you feel 100% better, then have a day where you feel as you did after the injury.

Common Symptoms of mTBI

| <i>Physical</i> | <i>Behavioral/Emotional</i> | <i>Cognitive/Thinking</i> | <i>Sleep</i> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Headache | Irritability | Feeling “In a Fog” | Drowsiness |
| Nausea/Vomiting | Depression | Attention Problems | Excessive Sleep |
| Tinnitus (Ringing in Ears) | Anxiety | Trouble Remembering | Difficulty Falling Asleep |
| Blurred Vision | Impulsivity | Trouble Finding Words | Altered Sleep Patterns |
| Sensitivity to Light/Noise | Lack of Initiation/Drive | Difficulty Filtering Noise & Keeping Up With Conversations | Awaking from Sleep Feeling Drained vs. Refreshed |
| Dizziness/Balance | Impaired Awareness | | |