

PAYING ATTENTION TO A MILD HEAD INJURY

After The Emergency Room

Did you or someone you care for recently hurt their head?

Did a doctor mention a concussion, brain injury or a hematoma?

All of these terms describe what may be a mild traumatic brain injury (TBI).

You should be aware that the symptoms of a mild brain injury may not become apparent until months after the injury. Additional follow-up care may be required to avoid permanent, life-altering consequences.

Traumatic Brain Injury Facts and Figures

The neurological consequences of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) are complex and can be subtle. TBI is significantly underdiagnosed and misdiagnosed because it's often confused with mental illness, hyperactivity and other conditions.

TBI In Georgia

More than 44,000 Georgians a year sustain a TBI doing everyday activities - driving, working around the house or playing sports. In Georgia, the leading causes of TBI's treated in emergency rooms are:

Falls (41%)

Motor vehicle/traffic crashes (21%)

Struck by an object or person (19%)

TBI In The United States

Approximately 1.4 million Americans are treated at a hospital for TBI each year Of these:

1.1 million are cared for and released from an emergency department

300,000 sustained their injury during sports or recreation

235,000 are hospitalized

50,000 die

Mild Brain Injury Symptoms Can Be Delayed

People with mild traumatic brain injury often look fine. That's why it's easy to miss the subtle clues of a TBI. Nevertheless, there could be real injury to the brain.

Be aware that TBI symptoms may include:

- Personality changes - depression, anxiety, anger, irritability
- Problems thinking - memory, concentration, learning, speaking, understanding
- A significant drop in performance at school or work, during sports or in social

situations

- Changes in sleep patterns or appetite
- Blurred vision, dizziness and nausea
- Persistent, unexplained headaches
- Feeling tired all the time

Do not wait to seek treatment. Your physician can help you evaluate these symptoms and pinpoint the cause of the problem.

What Can You Do?

Contact your physician and discuss the need for a referral to a brain injury specialist. These professionals include: neurologists, rehabilitation nurses, clinical neuropsychologists and others.

Only take the drugs that have been prescribed by a doctor. For instance, something as simple as an aspirin may be harmful because it can increase bleeding.

Get plenty of rest.

Don't drink alcohol.

Learn about brain injury, then educate family, teachers and coworkers so they do not set unreasonable expectations for the injured person.

For More Information

* Please refer to our Links for further organizations devoted to assisting people and their families with the consequences of TBI.