



WHAT TO DO IF YOU INJURE YOUR BRAIN

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO HIT YOUR HEAD TO INJURE YOUR BRAIN?

Your brain is not a hard, fixed substance; it is soft and jello-like in consistency, composed of millions of fine nerve fibers, and "floats" in fluid within a hard, bony skull containing multiple sharp ridges, making it easily injured.

A brain injury can result from a car crash, a sports injury, from a seemingly innocuous fall or even from a sudden, jarring movement of the head (like whiplash).

IF A BRAIN INJURY OCCURS

- If you or someone you're with experiences an impact or violent shake to the head, seek medical advice.

SYMPTOMS OF A BRAIN INJURY

Brain injury symptoms often include:

- Physical complaints - dizziness, fatigue, headaches, visual disturbances, trouble sleeping, sensitivity to light and sound, and poor balance
- Cognitive changes - poor concentration, memory problems, poor judgment, impulsivity, slowed performance, and difficulty putting thoughts into words
- Psychological concerns - depression, outbursts of anger, irritability, personality changes, and anxiety

HOW CAN I HELP MYSELF RECOVER FROM A BRAIN INJURY?

There are a number of self-care steps you can take to help your brain heal.

First and foremost, you should **protect yourself from injuring your brain again**. People who have had repeated injuries to their brain may experience serious long-term problems and, in rare cases, it can cause brain swelling and even death.

Other things that you can do to take care of your brain after an injury include:

- Get plenty of sleep at night, and rest during the day
- Write down the things that may be harder than usual for you to remember
- Avoid alcohol, drugs and caffeine
- Eat brain-healthy foods
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water
- Ask your doctor when it's okay for you to drive a car, ride a bike, or operate machinery



- Avoid activities that are physically demanding (e.g., sports, housework, exercising)
- Avoid activities that require a lot of thinking or concentration (e.g., working on the computer, playing video games, balancing a checkbook)
- Increase your activity slowly
- Be patient because healing takes time

RESOURCES

To learn more about healing from brain injuries, you can visit:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury
- Brain Injury Association of America - <http://www.biausa.org/>