




# Traumatic brain injury

Also called: craniocerebral trauma

Brain dysfunction caused by an outside force, usually a violent blow to the head.

## Common

More than 200,000 US cases per year

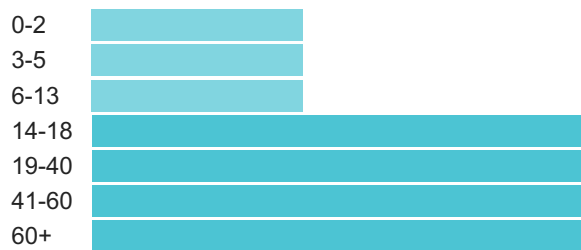
-  Treatable by a medical professional
-  Requires a medical diagnosis
-  Lab tests or imaging often required

Traumatic brain injury often occurs as a result of a severe sports injury or car accident.

Immediate or delayed symptoms may include confusion, blurry vision, and concentration difficulty. Infants may cry persistently or be irritable.

Treatment may involve rest, medication, and surgery.

## Ages affected



## Genders affected



## Symptoms

### Requires a medical diagnosis

Immediate or delayed symptoms may include confusion, blurry vision, and concentration difficulty. Infants may cry persistently or be irritable.

**People may experience:**

**Cognitive:** amnesia, inability to speak or understand language, mental confusion, difficulty concentrating, difficulty thinking and understanding, inability to create new memories, or inability to recognize common things

**Behavioral:** abnormal laughing and crying, aggression, impulsivity, irritability, lack of restraint, or persistent repetition of words or actions

**Whole body:** balance disorder, blackout, dizziness, fainting, or fatigue

**Mood:** anger, anxiety, apathy, or loneliness

**Eyes:** dilated pupil, raccoon eyes, or unequal pupils

**Gastrointestinal:** nausea or vomiting

**Speech:** slurred speech or impaired voice

**Visual:** blurred vision or sensitivity to light

**Also common:** persistent headache, a temporary moment of clarity, bleeding, bone fracture, bruising, depression, loss of smell, nerve injury, post-traumatic seizure, ringing in the ears, sensitivity to sound, or stiff muscles

**Treatments****Treatment depends on severity**

Treatment may involve rest, medication, and surgery.

**Medications**

**Diuretic:** Increases urine production to get rid of excess salt and water.

- Mannitol

**Surgery**

**Decompressive craniectomy:** Surgical removal of part of the skull so that an injured brain can swell without being squeezed.

**Therapies**

**Rehabilitation:** Retraining the brain's pathways to improve mental and physical functioning after an illness or injury. For example, after a blow to the head (concussion).

**Cognitive behavioral therapy:** A talk therapy focused on modifying negative thoughts, behaviors, and emotional responses associated with psychological distress.

**Anger management:** Practicing mindfulness, coping mechanisms, and trigger avoidance to minimize destructive emotional outbursts.

**Intervention:** A branch of psychology that treats personal problems related to school, work, family, and social life.

**Specialists**

**Neurologist:** Treats nervous system disorders.

**Critical care doctor:** Monitors and treats those in intensive care.

**Speech therapist:** Specializes in voice rehabilitation.

**Occupational therapist:** Improves daily living and work skills of patients.

**Physical medicine and rehabilitation:** Restores function and quality of life to those with physical disabilities.

**Neurosurgeon:** Specializes in nervous system disorders.

**Primary care provider (PCP):** Prevents, diagnoses, and treats diseases.

**Critical:** consult a doctor for medical advice

Note: The information you see describes what usually happens with a medical condition, but doesn't apply to everyone. This information isn't medical advice, so make sure to contact a healthcare provider if you have a medical problem. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or a emergency number immediately.

**Sources:** Mayo Clinic and others. [Learn more](#)