



Traumatic Brain Injury Program

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Information and recommendations



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DEFINITION OF MILD TBI

Mild traumatic brain injury (TBI), often called concussion, can result from a significant blow to the head (e.g. car accident, fall, ...). Mild TBI is a physiological disruption of brain function that is usually temporary. This condition may manifest itself at the physical, intellectual, behavioral and psychological levels.

Mild TBI is characterized by **at least one** of the following conditions:

- ▶ brief loss of consciousness
- ▶ difficulty in remembering events surrounding the accident
- ▶ a period of drowsiness, disorientation or confusion following the accident
- ▶ any difficulty or consequence related to the functioning of the brain (see list below)

DIFFICULTIES RELATED TO MILD TBI

Some people experience many difficulties, some only a few, and others none at all. It is often when the individual returns to his/her regular activities that he/she notices problems related to mild TBI. Difficulties most often encountered include:

- ▶ headaches
- ▶ dizziness / vertigo
- ▶ nausea / vomiting
- ▶ blurred vision
- ▶ fatigue
- ▶ drowsiness
- ▶ sleep disturbances
- ▶ sensitivity to light or noise
- ▶ hearing problems (e.g. ringing in the ears, ...)
- ▶ difficulty finding words
- ▶ slowness in thinking and comprehension
- ▶ slowness in performing task
- ▶ memory problems
- ▶ decreased attention and concentration
- ▶ irritability
- ▶ impulsivity / aggressiveness
- ▶ lack of initiative

If you experience any of these problems, you can expect them to decrease over the weeks following the accident. If your symptoms do not decrease, or if they increase and interfere with your daily activities after four weeks, do not hesitate to contact us. Usually, symptoms disappear gradually over a three month period. In some cases, the recovery may be longer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Rest and avoid excessive activity for at least 24 hours
- ▶ Do not drink alcohol for 48 hours to avoid hiding the development of symptoms
- ▶ Take analgesics according to your medical prescription or acetaminophen as needed
- ▶ Do not drive any motor vehicle during the 48 hours following the trauma and/or if any difficulties persist
- ▶ Resume your daily activities gradually as tolerated
- ▶ Look at the possibility of a gradual return to work or school according to your readiness to resume these activities
- ▶ Inform family members, or significant others, of your situation so they can understand your difficulties and help you
- ▶ If you have difficulty retaining information, take notes, make lists, use a daily planner, ...
- ▶ Do only one thing at a time, and maintain a quiet environment

COME TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS :

- ▶ progressive drowsiness
- ▶ confusion
- ▶ vomiting more than three times
- ▶ continuous headaches not relieved by analgesics (acetaminophen and codeine)
- ▶ drainage of fluid or blood from the ears or nose
- ▶ seizures or epilepsy
- ▶ blurred vision
- ▶ weakness in an arm or leg
- ▶ difficulty in waking up (inform your family and friends to observe you and to wake you up three times during the first night following your return home)

Professionals to contact :

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