

Brain Injury

“Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” Matthew 22:37 NIV

Your brain is one of the most important organs in your body since it coordinates all of the body's functions and thought processes. Without it you couldn't walk to the store, read your grocery list, count out your change, or hide the chocolate when you get home. It controls involuntary actions such as the beating of your heart and voluntary actions like dialing a phone. A traumatic brain injury (TBI) can happen to anyone and create many challenges for families living with TBI.

Those at highest risk are children 0-4 years old, 15-19 year olds, and military personnel. Although many injuries come from risk-taking activities such as sky diving or race car driving, many stem from normal actions of work and play like driving a car, playing a sport, or even falling at home. Long term effects of TBI include problems with memory, managing emotions, and risk of brain disorders in later years.

Decreasing the chance of an injury is easy with some basic safety practices. Wear seat belts to cut down on head injuries in the event of an accident. Have your children wear helmets when they ride bikes or rollerblade. Remove the clutter or throw rugs in the homes of your parents and older adults to prevent falls. A simple fall or blow to the head in any of these situations can cause severe complications requiring months or even years of rehabilitation with no guarantee of recovery.

If an injury does occur, watch the victim for signs of blurred vision, confusion, a severe headache, or repetition of questions or statements after the fall. Contact a doctor or visit the emergency room to determine the severity of the injury. Additional serious signs of a TBI might include violent vomiting, seizures or even loss of consciousness. As with other conditions, a timely visit to the emergency room is essential for long term health.

(Source: Brain Injury Association of America www.biausa.org/)

References / Resources:

www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/adultfalls.html - CDC website with information on injuries in the older adult due to falls

www.tbihome.org/index.html - peer support group for clients and families living with a traumatic brain injury – message boards and links to resources for patient and caregiver

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/traumaticbraininjury.html - resources for both professionals and families on brain injuries, treatment, and other educational topics