

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Concussion/Mild Traumatic Brain Injury

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center



U.S. Army photo by
359th Signal Brigade

DEFINITION:

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a blow or jolt to the head that disrupts the normal function of the brain. The severity of the TBI is determined at the time of the injury and may be classified as: mild, moderate or severe.

Did you know?

Concussion – another word for a mild TBI – is the most common form of TBI in the military. Symptoms of concussion often resolve within days or weeks.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

Physical

- Headache
- Sleep disturbances
- Dizziness
- Balance problems
- Nausea/vomiting
- Fatigue
- Visual disturbances
- Light sensitivity
- Ringing in ears

Cognitive

- Slowed thinking
- Poor concentration
- Memory problems
- Difficulty finding words

Emotional

- Feeling anxious
- Feeling depressed
- Irritability
- Mood swings



U.S. Air Force photo
by Airman 1st Class Matthew Flynn

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COPING TIPS:

- Write things down.
- Store important items like keys in a designated place to keep from losing them.
- Pace yourself and take breaks as needed.
- Focus on one thing at a time.
- Allow time for your brain to heal. It's the most important thing you can do.

RECOVERY TIPS:

- Avoid smoking.
- Sit out of contact sports.
- Get enough sleep — 7 to 8 hours a night.
- Take medications as instructed.
- Avoid overexerting yourself physically or mentally.
- If you're concerned about your symptoms or if they're not improving, see your provider.
- Stay engaged with your family and provider as your symptoms improve.
- Avoid using drugs, drinking alcohol or energy drinks. These can disrupt your recovery process.

Recovery is different for every person and depends on the nature of the injury.

FIND A DVBC SITE NEAR YOU:

- Camp Lejeune, N.C.
- Camp Pendleton, Calif.
- Fort Bragg, N.C.
- Fort Carson, Colo.
- Fort Hood, Texas
- Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany
- Naval Medical Center San Diego, Calif.
- San Antonio Military Medical Center, Texas
- Fort Drum, N.Y.
- Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska
- Fort Belvoir, Va.
- Fort Gordon, Ga.
- Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Md.
- VA Boston, Mass.
- VA Minneapolis, Minn.
- VA Palo Alto, Calif.
- VA Richmond, Va.
- VA Tampa, Fla.

