

## Recommendations:

- ✓ Schedule follow-up appointments for tests and services in your community before leaving the hospital.
- ✓ Make sure you understand verbal and written instructions for medicines and ongoing care, and what they are for.
- ✓ Call the doctor or return to the emergency room if you are having any problems.
- ✓ Take only those medications prescribed by the doctor.
- ✓ Rest as much as possible to let the injury heal, then slowly return to normal activities.
- ✓ Avoid bending and strenuous activities during the first week after injury.
- ✓ Avoid alcoholic beverages.
- ✓ Do not drive a vehicle until you are alert and feel normal.
- ✓ Don't operate tools or heavy equipment that could be harmful if you are not alert.
- ✓ Make sure your family doctor or clinic receives a copy of your record and all test reports. Have him/her check you again for any new or remaining problems.
- ✓ Tell the child's teacher/school about the injury and that it usually takes a few weeks for usual functioning and behavior to return. Ask the teacher to report any problems.
- ✓ Avoid further head injuries by using seat belts and helmets, and overall caution.

## Long Term Problems

Sometimes symptoms may surface a year or longer after injury. Talk to the doctor if you:

- ✓ Are feeling depressed or very emotional
- ✓ Have memory loss or mental slowness
- ✓ Have poor balance or lack of coordination
- ✓ Are tired, or have feelings of tension and nervousness
- ✓ Are unable to respond to stress and pressures with usual daily activities
- ✓ Are experiencing symptoms that may indicate the head injury is affecting your general health

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## KEEP THIS PAMPHLET FOR REFERENCE

### Resources (state)

#### Brain Injury Association of Oklahoma

PO Box 88, Hillsdale, OK 73743  
Tel: 800/765-6809 or 580/233-4363

#### Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Tel.: 405/521-3646

#### Traumatic Neurologic Injury Advisory Council

Oklahoma State Department of Health  
Tel: 405/271-3430

#### Oklahoma State Department of Education

Tel: 405/521-3301

#### Department of Rehabilitation Services

Tel: 405/951-3491

#### Oklahoma Indian Health Service

Tel.: 405/951-3716

#### Office of Handicapped Concerns

Tel: 405/521-3756

#### Easter Seals Society

Tel: 405/848-2525

#### Social Security Administration

Tel: 405/605-3000

#### Medicaid or Medicare Office

Tel: 800/633-4227

#### Oklahoma Hospital Association

Tel: 405/427-9537

#### Oklahoma Insurance Department

Tel.: 405/521-2828

#### Oklahoma University Affiliated Program

Tel.: 405/271-4500

#### OASIS

#### (Oklahoma Areawide Services Information System)

Tel: 800/426-2747

Information  
You Need to Know  
About

# Head Injury

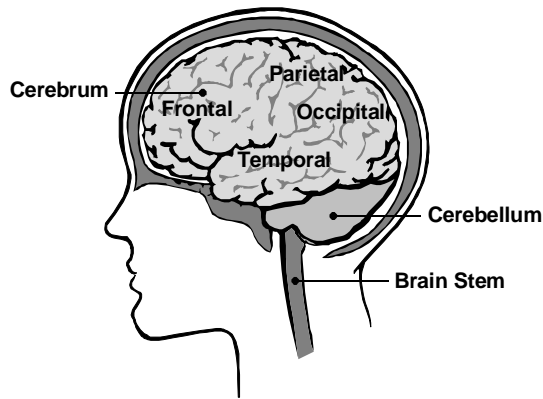
*For Reference  
After Your Stay  
at the Hospital*

Oklahoma State  
Department of Health



## Traumatic Head Or Brain Injury

results from trauma such as an object striking the head or the head striking an object, and/or rapid acceleration and deceleration of the brain inside the skull as with a car crash. The injuries may be open or closed. The brain has three parts and four lobes. The two halves or hemispheres of the brain work together yet each has distinct abilities such as language, memory, and the ability to analyze. The left hemisphere controls movement on the right side of the body and the right hemisphere controls left side movements. The problems people may have after injury



depend on the part of the brain that was injured and how badly it was hurt. When several parts of the brain have been injured, the person may have many functional problems.

The neurosurgeons, neurologists, specialists, nurses, therapists and other health care providers helped in your recovery. Follow up medical care is important and it is necessary to watch for possible problems.

## Effects Of Head Injury

**Symptoms or problems may appear weeks or months after head injury. Any changes you have that you do not understand should be checked. If any of the following problems occur, contact your physician immediately, go to the nearest emergency department, or return to this emergency department or hospital (even if it is several months after the head injury).**

### Physical

- ✓ Repeated vomiting
- ✓ Loss of consciousness/unconsciousness
- ✓ Weakness/loss of muscle strength in one or both sides of the body
- ✓ Convulsions/seizures
- ✓ Prolonged or high fever
- ✓ Headaches or headaches that get worse with emotional stress or physical activity
- ✓ New or increased neck pain or stiffness
- ✓ Fatigue/tire easily
- ✓ Trouble sleeping, abnormal sleepiness, or difficulty waking up
- ✓ Irregular or labored breathing
- ✓ Fainting, persistent dizziness, light-headedness
- ✓ Trouble speaking or swallowing, slurred speech
- ✓ Unsteadiness, lack of coordination or balance, or trouble walking
- ✓ Spasticity (jerking) of arms or legs
- ✓ Easy intoxication with alcohol
- ✓ Difficulty with daily activities or returning to work

### Behavior

- ✓ Change in behavior, personality or self image
- ✓ Lack of interest/motivation
- ✓ Extreme restlessness or agitation
- ✓ Irritable, anxious, overreacting to situations, or other emotional changes
- ✓ Quick to lose temper/argumentative
- ✓ Difficulty relating to others
- ✓ Accident prone
- ✓ Over-dependent, fearful
- ✓ Problems with relationships
- ✓ Impulsiveness, lack of self control
- ✓ Inappropriate behavior, loss of inhibitions
- ✓ Sad, depressed, or lonely
- ✓ Poor self management, social skills
- ✓ Denial of functional limitations
- ✓ Feelings of tenseness and nervousness
- ✓ Loss of inhibitions, reduced sex drive

### Sensory

- ✓ Changes in taste, smell, or touch
- ✓ Ringing/roaring in ears
- ✓ Bothered by noise
- ✓ Loss of hearing
- ✓ Blurred, double, or loss of vision
- ✓ Bothered by light
- ✓ Unusual/abnormal eye movement
- ✓ Unequal pupils— one large, one small pupil



### Thinking

- ✓ Mental confusion (forgetfulness, abnormal conversation)
- ✓ Trouble making decisions/poor judgment
- ✓ Trouble understanding what is said, read, or communicated
- ✓ Unable to tell what day it is, where they are, or what happened to them

- ✓ Problems with short- or long-term memory
- ✓ Difficulty with reading, spelling, calculations, writing
- ✓ Reacts and thinks slowly
- ✓ Trouble answering simple questions
- ✓ Trouble paying attention or concentrating, easily distracted
- ✓ Not aware of own physical, thinking, or behavioral problems
- ✓ Unable to grasp complexity of issues or ideas
- ✓ Difficulty remembering and learning new things
- ✓ Unable to do tasks in order
- ✓ Not knowing family and friends
- ✓ Difficulty planning, organizing, and carrying out goal-directed activity

### General

- ✓ Unable to find work or function in work environment
- ✓ Unable to function in school environment
- ✓ Difficulty performing self care and activities of daily living

### Additional Signs to Watch for In Children

- ✓ High pitched crying in infants
- ✓ Fussiness or irritability
- ✓ Changes in behavior that are not developmentally related
- ✓ Fearful
- ✓ Problems such as seizure disorder, delays in development, learning disability, hyperactivity, and/or behavioral problems
- ✓ Difficulty with sibling/peer relationships
- ✓ Diminished school performance