

# TBI SYMPTOMS

Brain injuries can range in scope from mild to severe. Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) can result in permanent neurobiological damage that can, to varying degrees, produce lifelong challenges for the individual. According to the Center for Disease Control, a brain injury resulting in altered mental status and/or loss of consciousness for up to 30 minutes may be called "mild." Unconsciousness lasting from 30 minutes to 24 hours is associated with brain injuries of moderate severity, while unconsciousness lasting longer than 24 hours (coma) are classified as severe. The effect of a traumatic brain injury on an individual's level of functioning afterward depends on the following:

- The severity of initial injury
- The rate/completeness of physiological recovery
- Which of the brain's functions are directly affected by the injury
- The meaning of the dysfunction to the individual (in other words, how reliant was the person on those functions before they were lost?)
- Resources available to aid recovery (medical, counseling, etc.)
- What areas of function remain intact and operational after the injury

## EFFECTS OF A TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY CAN INCLUDE:



### COGNITIVE DEFICITS

Cognitive deficits, including difficulties with

- Attention
- Concentration
- Distractibility
- Memory
- Speed of Processing
- Confusion
- Perseveration
- Impulsiveness
- Language Processing

Specifically, difficulties with **speech and language** may include

- Not understanding the spoken word (called "receptive aphasia")
- Difficulty speaking and being understood (called "expressive aphasia")
- Slurred speech
- Speaking very quickly or very slowly
- Problems with reading
- Problems with writing



## SENSORY DEFICITS

Sensory deficits are defined as difficulties with interpretation of touch, temperature, movement, limb position and fine discrimination. These may include:

- A decrease in, or loss of, hearing ability
- Ringing in the ears (called “tinnitus”)
- An increased sensitivity to sounds
- Partial or total loss of vision
- Weakness of eye muscles and double vision (diplopia)
- Blurred vision
- Problems judging distances visually
- Involuntary eye movements (called “nystagmus”)
- Intolerance of light (called “photophobia”)
- Lost or diminished sense of smell (called “anosmia”)
- Lost or diminished sense of taste
- Inability to filter senses, easily overloaded



## PERCEPTUAL DEFICITS

Perceptual deficits have to do with the integration or patterning of sensory impressions into psychologically meaningful data- in other words, difficulty in understanding and making sense of the goings-on in the world around you. Specifically, these deficits may include:

- Seizures, which are involuntary convulsions which can involve disruption in consciousness, sensory perception, or motor movements
- Physical paralysis/spasticity
- Chronic pain
- Control of bowel and bladder
- Sleep disorders
- Loss of stamina/energy
- Appetite changes
- Poor regulation of body temperature
- Menstrual difficulties



## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

Social-emotional symptoms may include the following:

- Dependent behaviors (needing to rely on help from others to accomplish tasks)
- Emotional lability (mood swings, unpredictable emotional displays, intense moods)
- Lack of motivation
- Irritability
- Aggression
- Depression
- Disinhibition/Impulsivity
- Denial/lack of awareness