



Traumatic Brain Injury

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is an alteration of the normal functioning of the brain. A mild traumatic brain injury, also known as a concussion can be caused by a blow to the head, blast, falls, object penetrating the skull or may occur when the brain moves back and forth forcefully in the skull.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), TBI is a serious public health problem that affects approximately 1.7 million Americans every year and, of all injury deaths in our country, one in three cases are TBI related, with an estimated 5.3 million Americans living with a TBI related disability.

For the active duty, blasts are the most common cause of concussion (DVBIC). In the non-deployment setting and the civilian population, risk factors for developing a concussion may include the following: motor vehicle accidents, falls, high impact sports, recreational activities and physical abuse.

Symptoms of concussion depend on its severity and may include the following: headache, problems with memory, judgment, balance and sleep.

TBI prevention strategies should be aimed at providing awareness of modifiable risk factors. Things to do to reduce the possibility of sustaining a head injury:

KEY POINTS...

- Utilize personal protective equipment (PPE) during high impact sports and all recreational activities.
- Wear seatbelts at all times. Ensure that children are strapped into age appropriate safety seats.
- Decrease the risk of falls by ensuring that your home is well lit and free of clutter.
- Keep firearms out of the reach of children by locking them away.
- Install window guards and safety gates at stairs.

LINKS:

- <http://www.dcoe.mil>
- <http://www.neuro.pmr.vcu.edu>
- <http://www.dvbic.org>
- <http://www.biausa.org>
- <http://www.cdc.org>