



# Prevention of Childhood Brain Injury

An acquired brain injury is brain damage caused by events after birth, rather than as part of a genetic or congenital disorder. These include strokes, brain illness and other brain injuries. They differ from degenerative brain conditions, such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease.

Some of the effects that a brain injury can have include:

- Cognitive effects, like memory problems, difficulty concentrating, poor planning and judgment skills, language difficulties, and a lack of problem-solving skills
- Sensory effects, like altered visual or spatial perception, or reduced sense of touch, vision or hearing
- Emotional effects, like being impulsive, risky behavior, depression, anxiety, aggression or paranoia
- Physical effects, like severe headaches, seizures, poor coordination and balance, slurred speech, and being unable to move

Brain injuries can be traumatic, caused by an external force, or non-traumatic, caused by internal events. A blow to the head or a penetrating head injury most often happens during falls, motor vehicle accidents, abuse or assault, and being struck by or against something. Internal events that cause brain injury include stroke, infection, or anoxia and hypoxia.

For more information on services and supports, contact:

- [Office of Acquired Brain Injury](#)
- [Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services](#)
- [2-1-1 Texas](#).

## What is a Developmental Disability?

Identifying brain injury can occur immediately following an injury or several days, weeks or months after. In the event of a life-threatening brain injury, identifying a

brain injury early can save lives.

The signs and symptoms of a brain injury can be subtle. Symptoms may even be missed as people "look normal" or "feel fine." Know the signs and symptoms and take brain injury seriously.

If someone's head or body has been hit or jolted, call 911 or go to the emergency room if they are experiencing:

- Confusion or disorientation
- Loss of consciousness
- Severe headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness
- Blood or clear fluid draining from nose or ears
- Weakness, numbness or tingling in limbs
- Trouble walking
- Slurred speech or vision issues
- Seizure

Continue to monitor for signs and symptoms over the next few weeks and months, even if you don't observe any immediately. See a doctor if you notice any of these changes:

- Concentration and memory problems
- Changes in work or school performance
- Delayed thinking and understanding
- Poor balance and coordination
- Sleep disturbances or fatigue
- Ongoing headaches or neck pain
- Sensitivity to light and noise
- Changes in personality and behavior
- Irritability or aggression
- Depression or anxiety

HHS has [publications you can download](#) or [order](#) to help you remember these signs and symptoms, or to share with others. Learn more about the signs and symptoms of a brain injury at the [CDC's HEADS UP](#) website or [Brainline.org](#), which also has information about various aspects of life after brain injury.