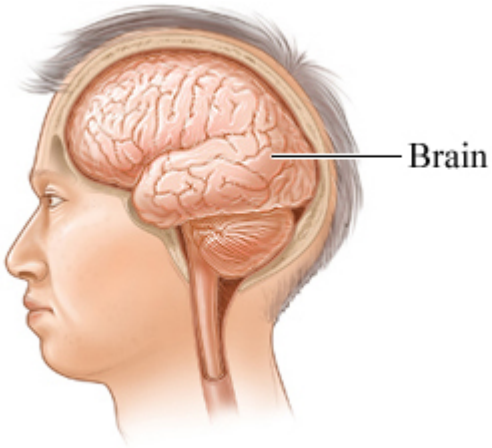
# Traumatic Brain Injury, Long-Term Healing: Care Instructions



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## Overview

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is an injury that impacts how the brain works. This can be caused by a bump to the head or an injury like a fall that jars or shakes the head or body. A TBI can also be caused by an object entering the brain, such as through violence or a car crash.

It will take time for you to get better. You may worry about how you are feeling. This is normal. TBIs often have long-term effects. These include:

- Not thinking clearly, or having trouble remembering new information.
- Having headaches, vision problems, or dizziness.
- Feeling sad or nervous.
- Getting angry easily.
- Sleeping more or less than usual.

No one will be able to tell you for sure how long the symptoms will last. But there are things you can do to help yourself get better.

You may need another person to watch you closely to make sure that your symptoms aren't getting worse. Follow your doctor's instructions about how long you need someone to stay with you.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## How can you care for yourself at home?

### What you and your doctors can do

Different types of therapy and support may used to help you recover from a TBI. Follow the plan your doctor suggests. This may include:

- Physical and occupational therapy. These help you return to daily activities and live as independently as possible.
- Speech and language therapy. You may need help understanding and producing language. Speech and language therapists also help you organize daily tasks and develop problem-solving methods.
- Counseling. This can help you understand your thoughts and learn ways to cope with your feelings. Counseling can help you feel more in control. It can help get you back to your life's activities.
- Social support and support groups. It's important that you get the chance to talk with people who are going through the same things you are. Your family or friends may be able to support you.
- Medicines. These may help relieve symptoms like sleep problems, chronic pain, and headaches. Medicine can also help if you have anxiety, depression, or memory problems. Talk with your doctor about what medicines might be best for you. Also ask which medicines you should not take.

### What you can do

Here are some ways you can help yourself:

- Get plenty of sleep, and take it easy during the day. Rest is the best way to recover.
- Don't drink alcohol or use drugs.
- Don't drive a car, ride a bike, or operate machinery until your doctor says it's okay.
- Ask your doctor when it is okay to return to sports or athletics.
- Avoid activities that are physically or mentally demanding. These include housework, exercise, schoolwork, video games, text messaging, or using the computer. You may need to change your school or work schedule for a while.
- If you feel irritable, get away from whatever is bothering you.

## When should you call for help?

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your symptoms get worse. These include headaches, trouble concentrating, or changes in your mood.
- You have been feeling sad, depressed, or hopeless, or have lost interest in things you usually enjoy.
- You do not get better as expected.

## Where can you learn more?

**Go to https://www.healthwise.net/patiented**

Enter **P943** in the search box to learn more about **"Traumatic Brain Injury, Long-Term Healing: Care Instructions".**

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