

Traumatic Brain Injury Prevention Information for Parents



Injuries are the leading cause of death in New York State (NYS) for children ages 1 to 19 years.

How many children are injured because of a fall?

- Falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations and emergency department visits in NYS for children ages 14 and younger, and the second leading cause of injury for children ages 15 to 19.
- Hospitals treat an average of more than 106,000 fall-related injuries in children under 19 each year in NYS.

What is a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)?

- A traumatic brain injury, also called a TBI, is a specific type of damage to the brain that disrupts its functioning. Not all blows to the head result in a TBI.

What is a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)?

- A TBI can occur when the head:
 - is violently shaken by external force (e.g., a hard hit in football, shaken baby syndrome)
 - hits a stationary object (e.g., hits pavement during a fall from a bike, windshield in a car crash)
 - is hit (e.g., by impact from a ball)
 - is pierced (e.g., gunshot wound)
- The severity of a TBI can range from mild to severe, depending on the extent of the damage to the brain.

TBI Data

- In NYS, 20% of children who are hospitalized for sports-related injuries sustain a TBI.
- Each year in NYS:
 - An average of over 6,000 children ages 19 and younger were treated at a hospital for injuries sustained while using wheeled recreational equipment. 20 % of the children who were hospitalized had a TBI.
- In NYS, an average of almost 3,000 children ages 19 and younger were treated each year at a hospital for injuries sustained while either skiing or snowboarding.
 - Over 15% of these children who were hospitalized and over 10% of those seen as outpatients at hospital emergency departments had a TBI.

Signs and Symptoms of a TBI

- The signs and symptoms of a TBI can be either subtle or obvious depending on the severity of the injury.
- Some common signs and symptoms of a TBI include:
 - Headaches or neck pain that do not go away;
 - Difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions;
 - Slowness in thinking, speaking, acting, or reading;
 - Getting lost or easily confused;
 - Feeling tired all of the time, having no energy or motivation;
 - Mood changes (feeling sad or angry for no reason);
 - Changes in sleep patterns (sleeping a lot more or having a hard time sleeping);
 - Light-headedness, dizziness, or loss of balance;
 - Urge to vomit (nausea);
 - Increased sensitivity to lights, sounds, or distractions;
 - Blurred vision or eyes that tire easily;
 - Loss of sense of smell or taste; and
 - Ringing in the ears

Signs and Symptoms of a TBI

- Children with a brain injury can have the same signs and symptoms as adults, but it is often harder for them to let others know how they feel.
- Call your child's doctor if he/she had a blow to the head and you notice any of these symptoms:
 - Tiredness or listlessness;
 - Irritability or crankiness (will not stop crying or cannot be consoled);
 - Changes in eating (will not eat or nurse);
 - Changes in sleep patterns;
 - Changes in the way the child plays;
 - Changes in performance at school;
 - Lack of interest in favorite toys or activities;
 - Loss of new skills, such as toilet training;
 - Loss of balance or unsteady walking; or
 - Vomiting

Long-Term Consequences of a TBI

- TBI can cause a wide range of functional changes affecting thinking, sensation, language, or emotions.
- TBI can also cause epilepsy and increase the risk for conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and other brain disorders that become more prevalent with age.
- Repeated mild TBIs sustained over months or years can result in lasting physical and mental changes. Repeated mild TBIs occurring within a short period of time, such as hours, days, or even weeks, can be fatal.

For More Information

- Brain Injury Association of New York State
(www.bianys.org)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
(www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury/tbi_concussion.html
)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
“Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports Toolkit”
(www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury/coachestoolkit.html)

Questions?

Contact Us!

Enter your organization's contact information here.