

**If you have additional questions,
please contact these organizations:**



Injury and Violence Prevention Unit
85 East 7th Place, Suite 300
PO Box 64882
St. Paul, MN 55164-0882
651-215-8954

**www.health.state.mn.us/injury
injury.prevention@health.state.mn.us**



Brain Injury Association of Minnesota
45 Main Street, Suite 135
Minneapolis, MN 55414
612-378-2742
1-800-669-6442

www.braininjurymn.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC)

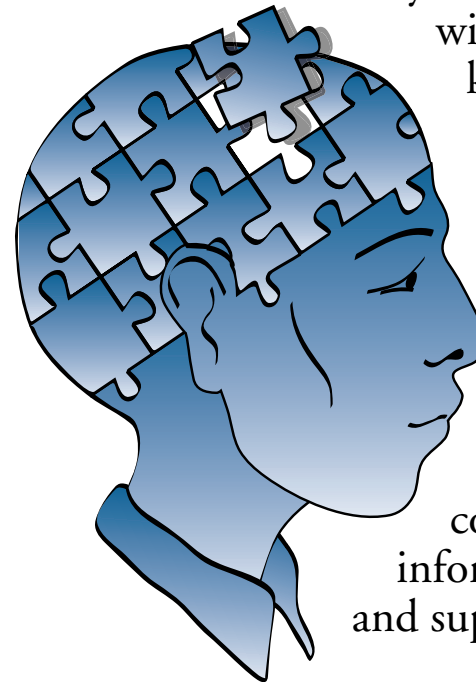
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/default.htm>

Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, Braille or cassette tape. Printed on recycled paper.

Getting Better After Traumatic Brain Injury or Concussion

Every brain injury is unique, so your symptoms may be different from those of other people. Maybe you are not even sure if your symptom is related to your injury.

In this brochure is a checklist of signs and symptoms. Check those that you are experiencing more often than you did before your injury. Discuss them with a professional who knows about brain injury.



The good news is that help is available and that you are not alone. Many people with brain injuries or concussions are finding information, services, and support.

Some Signs and Symptoms

Thinking:

- Do you more often forget names, numbers, appointments, or things you said you would do?
- Is it harder to follow a conversation among several people?
- Is it harder to follow the plot of a movie, or remember what a speaker said?
- Do you often re-read something you just read because you can not remember?
- Do you get lost more easily?
- Do people tell you they didn't know what you meant by something? Or that you used a different word than you think you used?
- Is it more difficult to remember what you should be doing next?
- Is it harder to learn a new procedure or task?
- Is it harder to write notes while a speaker goes on to a new topic?
- Do you sometimes forget to plan for something important?

Emotions:

- Do you laugh or cry more often, or at times that are not appropriate?
- Do you lose your temper or get impatient more easily?
- Have you recently had problems on a job, or serious arguments with others?
- Does your spouse, close friend, or child get angry at you more often, or seem afraid of you?
- Are you more sad or depressed than before?
- Do you get restless, irritated, or agitated more often?
- Do you have more trouble sleeping?

Physical changes:

- Does noise bother you more than before?
- Do you lose your balance more often?
- Do you have blurred or double vision?
- Do you have headaches more often?
- Do you find that you can't smell or taste things as well as before?
- Is speech more difficult, or do people find it difficult to understand your words?
- Have you had seizures?

Show this checklist to your doctor and ask if you should be referred to a neuropsychologist or psychiatrist. Your symptoms may be caused by a concussion or a traumatic brain injury.

Tips for Healing

As you seek services and resources, see [Minnesota Services and Agencies That Can Help](#) which is available on the MDH website: www.health.state.mn.us/injury. You can do these things for yourself as you begin to regain abilities.

Take care of your health:

- Eat well.
- Sleep on a regular schedule, and rest when you are tired.



- Make sure your doctor knows about all the drugs/medications or nutritional supplements you are taking.
- Limit your use of alcohol and certain drugs, as they can slow your recovery and put you at risk of further injury.
- Seek out occupational, speech, or physical therapy if you feel you need it.
- Avoid strenuous physical activity or risk-taking that might lead to another brain injury.

Get on with your social life:

- As you are able, return to your regular activities, but do not try to do everything at once.
- Work on one thing at a time, if you are easily distracted.
- Keep in contact with friends and family. Talk to them about important decisions.
- Ask your doctor about driving, bicycling, or operating equipment, because your injury may have affected vision, balance, or reaction time.



- Seek individual counseling or support groups. A counselor can help you deal with your feelings about brain injury

and ways it has changed you. The Brain Injury Association of Minnesota can link you to support groups.

- If memory is a problem, carry a notebook to write things down. Investigate the use of calendars, computer programs, personal data assistants, and other memory aids. Contact the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota for information.

Get back to school:

- If your child has had a concussion or a brain injury, get an assessment by a neuropsychologist (or the school psychologist) to measure the injury and how it is likely to affect the child. This can be the basis for an individual education plan (IEP).

Get Back to work:

- For adults, the neuropsychological assessment may help your employer understand your needs and may help you get benefits. If you wish to share this information with your employer, give your consent to your doctor.
- Learn how your injury may affect you on the job and discuss any needed accommodations with your supervisor.
- If you cannot return to your former job, or are having problems with the job, contact the Department of Economic Security. A rehabilitation counselor can help you with decisions about new career choices, training or rehabilitation, and financial support.

