



Mild Traumatic Brain Injury

NEUROTRAUMA CENTER

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury – Mild TBI/Concussion

What is traumatic brain injury?

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is an injury to the brain caused by a blow or jolt to the head from blunt or penetrating trauma. The injury that occurs at the moment of impact is known as the primary injury. Primary injuries can involve a specific lobe of the brain or the entire brain. Sometimes the skull may be fractured, but not always. Immediately after the accident the person may be confused, not remember what happened, have blurry vision and dizziness, nausea and vomiting, or lose consciousness.

What are the symptoms?

Depending on the type and location of the injury, the person's symptoms may include:

- Loss of consciousness
- Confusion and disorientation
- Memory loss/amnesia
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Visual problems
- Poor attention/concentration
- Sleep disturbances
- Dizziness/loss of balance
- Irritability/emotional disturbances
- Feelings of depression
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Seizures

What is the treatment?

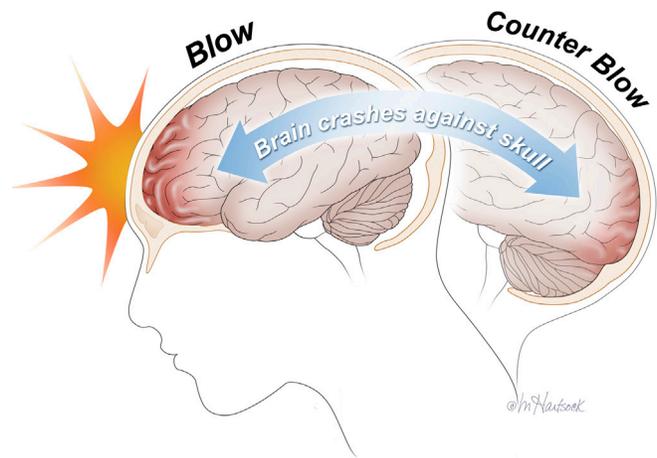
Patients with a mild TBI usually do not require surgery. They generally need rest and, at times, medications or therapies to help relieve persistent symptoms.

What is the recovery for a mild TBI?

After a mild brain injury patients can have a wide variety of symptoms. Some patients may not experience any symptoms, while others can have severe symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, memory problems, sleep disorders, fatigue, high levels of emotions or, in some cases, seizures. Descriptions of the common problems people experience after a mild brain injury are listed below:

Headaches

Headaches are a very common problem after a TBI. Most patients with a TBI will experience headaches. Over-the-counter acetaminophen (Tylenol) is the best medication to treat your headaches. In most patients,



headaches will go away within one month and they should gradually improve with time. If your headache would worsen or become severe and unrelieved by pain medication, call your health care provider or return to the emergency department.

Dizziness

Dizziness is another very common symptom. The dizziness should improve with time. However if it becomes severe and makes it difficult to complete tasks, please contact your health care provider to discuss options for treating your dizziness.

Memory problems

Memory problems are common among patients with a TBI. This can range from problems with organizing tasks to remembering names or even the grocery list. This is called your short-term memory. Generally these memory problems are mild and will resolve over time. However, some patients may need to get help from a speech therapist. A speech therapist can help with ways to organize your thoughts and tasks, and provide tips to practice at home for improving your short-term memory.

Sleep disorders/Fatigue

Patients with a TBI can also have problems with sleep and fatigue. Initially, after a head injury, patients will feel tired, need frequent rest periods, and may want to sleep most of the time for the first several days. Patients may also have difficulty sleeping well at night. It is important to increase your activity level gradually every day. Increasing activity to include light exercise may help your symptoms improve. Keeping the same bedtime every night and reducing mental and physical stimuli for one hour before bedtime may aid in sleep. When going back to work it is important to take your activity tolerance into account. You might need to work part-time initially to build up your endurance before going back full-time. Like all other symptoms, these will diminish with time.

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Normal symptoms in the first few weeks following a mild traumatic brain injury are:

Physical		Thinking	Emotional	Sleep
Headaches	Sensitivity to light	Feeling mentally foggy	Irritability	Drowsiness
Nausea	Sensitivity to noise	Problems concentrating	Sadness	Sleeping more than usual
Fatigue	Numbness or tingling	Problems remembering	Feeling more emotional	Sleeping less than usual
Occasional vomiting	Visual problems	Thinking slower	Anxiety	Trouble falling asleep
Dizziness	Balance problems		Nervousness	Trouble staying asleep

Call your doctor or go to the emergency department if you experience any of the following:

Worsening headaches or headaches unrelieved by medications	Feel <u>very</u> drowsy	Cannot recognize people or places	Unusual behavior changes
Seizures	<u>Repeated</u> vomiting	Increasing confusion	Increasing irritability
New neck pain	New slurred speech	Weakness or numbness in arms or legs	Loss of consciousness

Returning to Daily Activities

1. Get rest. Keep the same bedtime every night.
2. Take daytime naps or rest breaks when you feel tired.
3. Limit physical activity as well as activities that require a high level of thinking or concentration. These activities can make symptoms worse if you push yourself too hard.
4. Drink plenty of fluids and eat carbohydrates or protein to maintain appropriate blood sugar levels.
5. As symptoms decrease, you may begin to gradually return to your daily activities. If symptoms worsen or return, lessen your activities and try again in a few days. Mild TBI symptoms can take up to 3 months or longer to completely resolve.
6. During recovery, it is normal to feel frustrated, sad and emotional. Be patient and allow yourself to rest when needed.

Please call the Neurotrauma Hotline with questions regarding your recovery at **(513) 584-2804**

Find more information at [UCHealth.com/Neurotrauma](https://www.uchealth.com/Neurotrauma)

