

# HELP IMPROVE OUTCOMES IN CHILDREN AFTER A TBI

As a healthcare provider, you play a critical role in Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) recovery by providing care, education, and referrals to optimize outcomes in this vulnerable population.

A TBI is a serious public health problem that can affect a child's overall health and well-being.

**Common causes by age group:**



Falls, and being struck by or against an object



Falls, and motor vehicle crashes



## WHAT IS A TBI?

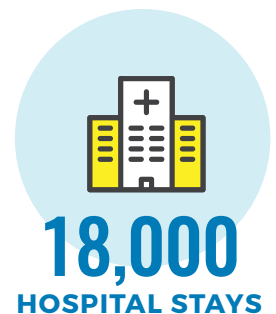
A Traumatic Brain Injury disrupts the normal function of the brain and can be caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head. Injuries can range from mild to severe based on the number and type of symptoms.

Children whose brains are still developing are especially at risk for long-term effects from a TBI. Symptom assessment, understanding a child's medical history, and follow-up are especially critical for children to help recovery, and to ensure good health across their lifespan.

CDC's Report to Congress outlines current gaps in TBI care, and provides clear opportunities for action to improve the management and outcomes of TBI in children.

### TBI IN CHILDREN IN 2013

Among children aged 14 and younger, TBI contributed to nearly:



Taylor CA, Bell JM, Breiding MJ, Xu L. Traumatic brain injury-related emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths—United States, 2007 and 2013. *MMWR Surveillance Summaries*. 2017; 66

## TBI Effects can Last a Lifetime

Most children are resilient and recover well following a TBI, but some effects can cause problems later in life, such as:

- Academic challenges and difficulty finding a job
- Chronic behavior problems
- Social isolation
- Difficulty with peer relationships
- Risk for offending behavior and incarceration
- Lower participation in activities
- Depression and other mental health diagnoses



## PROVIDER COORDINATION IS KEY TO IMPROVED OUTCOMES

While each child's recovery from a TBI is unique, healthcare providers working closely with parents and school professionals throughout the recovery process can improve outcomes. As a healthcare provider, your influence can extend beyond the exam room to help bridge gaps in care.

### TREAT

- Implement the most recent guidelines for TBI assessment and management.
- Involve a multidisciplinary team in the management of the physical, cognitive, and social issues that the family and child may experience.

### COORDINATE

- Offer referrals for rehabilitation and other services available in your community.
- Collaborate with parents and schools to create healthcare-to-school transition plans.
- Refer families with children younger than 5 to early intervention services, preschool special education services, or state-based programs, such as [Child Find](#).
- Assist families in managing physical, cognitive, and social issues for the family and child.

### EDUCATE

- Inform parents and families about available medical and school services, and encourage them to seek school support.
- Provide counseling and educational materials to help families identify and access healthcare and school services.

### MONITOR

- Encourage parents to document any physical, cognitive, and behavioral challenges the child experiences after receiving initial medical care.
- Provide ongoing follow-up and monitoring to assist with a successful return to school.

**Children recovering from a TBI need ongoing monitoring, coordinated care, and support. Although initial medical management focuses on survival and reducing medical problems, the ultimate goal is for children to return to optimal functioning and quality of life.**



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

### LEARN MORE

TBI: [www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury](http://www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury)  
HEADS UP: [www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP](http://www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP)