



ACCIDENTS HAPPEN

Joe's Story

Joe and Sam had been best friends since they were kids, and they even joined the Army together after high school. During their last tour, they were riding with their unit through a rocky hillside, and the convoy lost control and overturned. No one was seriously injured, other than some small cuts and bruises—or so Joe thought. As they returned to camp, Joe's head began to pound, and he began to feel extremely disoriented. Sam told Joe to sit down and relax, but Joe refused. "I'll be all right, just need a minute. We have the mission tomorrow, and I'm not going to seem like a wuss." Sam continued to insist, and even though Joe began to put up a fight, Sam didn't back down. "Dude, you need to chill right now. You might have a concussion." Joe listened and went to the camp medic.



"You're lucky you listened to your friend and came to talk to me. Your friend's right; you have a mild concussion, but if you had tried to go out on a mission, you could've gotten your whole unit killed. It's happened before." Joe sat out the following day, and his entire unit made it back home safely.

TEST YOURSELF!

Test your knowledge about traumatic brain injury by answering the following questions:

- Concussion is just another word for a mild TBI.
 - True
 - False
- Service members aged 18-24 are at the highest risk of receiving a TBI.
 - True
 - False
- Drinking alcohol with a concussion is a good idea because it can help you sleep.
 - True
 - False
- Nausea and vomiting are emotional symptoms of a TBI.
 - True
 - False
- Who is eligible to participate in the Traumatic Brain Injury Recovery Support Program?
 - Veterans
 - Service members
 - Family members of service members
 - All of the above

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

IN THE MILITARY



Answers: 1. a; 2. a; 3. b; 4. b; 5. d

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SHAKEN UP

WHAT IS A TBI?

TBIs—traumatic brain injuries—are a major health issue that affects service members and veterans during times of both peace and war. A TBI is a blow or jolt to the head that disrupts the normal function of the brain. It may knock you out briefly or for an extended period of time. A traumatic brain injury can be classified as mild, moderate, or severe, and the classification is determined at the time of injury.

Concussion is just another word for a mild TBI, and it is the most common form of TBI. Although not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI, you should be aware of the symptoms and contact your health provider if you believe you have a concussion.

IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU!

Who's At Risk for a TBI?

The high rate of TBIs affects the health and safety of individual service members, the level of unit readiness and troop retention, and can affect any branch of the military. Active duty and reserve service members are at an increased risk, specifically young adults from 18-24. Military service members are increasingly deployed to areas where they are at risk for experiencing blast exposures from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bombers, land mines, mortar rounds and rocket-propelled grenades. TBIs can also occur during motor vehicle crashes or rollovers, sports and assaults.



IT'S ONLY A HEADACHE, RIGHT?

What Should You Do?

There are physical, cognitive and emotional symptoms of TBI, and all should be discussed with your medical provider.

Physical symptoms include:

- Headaches
- Problems sleeping
- Dizziness/Balance problems
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Problems with your eyesight
- Sensitivity to light
- Ringing in your ears

Cognitive symptoms include:

- Problems concentrating and paying attention
- Temporary gaps in memory
- Slowed thinking/Difficulty finding words

Emotional signs of a TBI include:

- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Mood Swings

SO WHAT SHOULD YOU DO If It Happens to You?

Since most TBIs are mild, most people recover fairly quickly; however, the nature of each injury and how it affects an individual can vary. To cope with a TBI:

- Get plenty of rest, both physically and mentally to protect yourself from another concussion.
- Drink plenty of water, and avoid alcohol or drug use. Don't even take over-the-counter medications, unless your medical provider instructs you to do so.
- Stay engaged with family members and your medical provider, and be honest about your symptoms.
- Ultimately, be patient and give your brain time to heal.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY Recovery Support Program

Depending on the nature of their injuries, many service members express difficulty successfully participating in their treatment or remembering appointments or medications. Open to all service members, members of National Guard and reserves, veterans, family members, and caregivers, the Traumatic Brain Injury Recovery Support Program is set up to provide a nationwide network for care coordination. The goal is to identify those who have suffered a TBI, treat their symptoms, and identify subsequent conditions that may delay their return to duty.

