

What is Brain Injury?



brain injury AUSTRALIA
www.braininjuryaustralia.org.au

Brain injury, sometimes called Acquired Brain Injury, describes any damage to the brain that happens after birth. The damage can be caused by an accident or trauma, a stroke, a disease or infection, or alcohol and other drugs.

Over 700,000 Australians have a brain injury. Because the brain controls every part of the body, the injury may not only affect the way a person thinks or behaves but how they physically function as well.

Since no two people are the same, every brain injury can be different in its effects. Recovery from brain injury may take a short time for some people, a long time for others. Some people do not fully recover from their brain injury.



Some Common Causes of Brain Injury

Hypoxia/Anoxia

The brain needs oxygen to work. Anoxia happens when supply of oxygen to the brain is stopped. Hypoxia happens when the supply of oxygen to the brain is restricted. Anoxia or Hypoxia can be caused by heart or asthma attacks, near-drownings, strangulations, and drug overdoses.

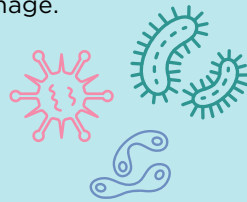


Tumour

A tumour is an abnormal growth of cells that form a mass or lump. www.cancercouncil.com.au/brain-cancer/#tumour

Infection

Like other parts of the body, the brain can become infected. This is often caused by viruses or bacteria. The infection can cause swelling to the brain which results in damage.



Stroke

The brain needs blood to work. A stroke occurs when the supply of blood to the brain is stopped by a clot (blood that has become solid) or bleeding. To learn more about stroke, please visit the Stroke Foundation: www.strokefoundation.org.au.

Alcohol and other Drugs

Using too much alcohol or other drugs can damage the brain. For more information about Australian Alcohol Guidelines, please go to: www.health.gov.au/news/australian-alcohol-guidelines-revised.

Diseases

Some diseases can cause parts of the brain to stop working or die. These diseases are called neurodegenerative diseases, and include Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease, and Alzheimer's disease. For more information about these diseases, please visit the Brain Foundation at: www.brainfoundation.org.au.



Accidents or Trauma

A Traumatic Brain Injury happens when the head is hit or shaken, from motor vehicle accidents or playing sport, from falls or assaults. A concussion is a mild type of Traumatic Brain Injury.



Effects and Experiences

A person with brain injury may experience physical effects. This can include:

- paralysis (loss of strength or control over muscles in a part of the body)
- poor balance or coordination
- physical and mental fatigue
- pain
- seizures (the injury causes changes in the brain's electrical activity)
- loss of the sense of taste or smell
- difficulties with vision or hearing
- difficulties with speaking

A person with brain injury may experience changes in the way they think or learn. This can include:

- problems with memory
- problems with concentration or attention
- difficulty setting goals
- difficulty with planning or organisation
- difficulty learning new information or learning from mistakes



A person with brain injury may have problems with controlling their emotions or behaviour. This can result in:

- being more impulsive (saying or doing things without thinking)
- being more aggressive with words or actions



Myths and Facts

Myth

Brain injury is an intellectual disability.

Fact

Most people with a brain injury keep the intelligence they had before their injury. Brain injury may impact the performance and expression of a person's intelligence.

Myth

Brain injury recovery takes place within 2 weeks.

Fact

Because every brain injury is different, every person's recovery is different. Recovery can continue beyond 5 years after injury.

Myth

Everyone recovers quickly from a mild Traumatic Brain Injury, such as a concussion.

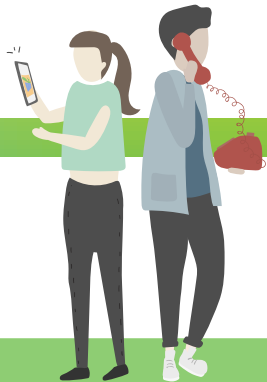
Fact

Most people fully recover from a mild Traumatic Brain Injury, such as a concussion, within days or weeks of being injured. Some people take longer to recover. If you are worried about recovery from brain injury, please see a doctor.

About Brain Injury Australia

Founded in 1986, Brain Injury Australia is the nation's peak advocacy organisation representing people with a brain injury, their families, and carers. Along with providing policy advice to Commonwealth, State and Territory government and their agencies, Brain Injury Australia represents people with brain injury on a range of advisory groups. Brain Injury Australia also drives multi-year public education campaigns to raise awareness about brain injury and produces the annual National Brain Injury Conference.

For more information, please go to www.braininjuryaustralia.org.au or call 1800 BRAIN1 (1800 272 461).



Help in Your State or Territory

If you need more information about brain injury or for help, please contact a service organisation based in your state and territory.

New South Wales

Synapse

provides a range of support services for people who have been impacted by brain injury
Freecall: 1800 673 074
www.synapse.org.au

Acquired Brain Injury Services NSW Inc.

is a not-for-profit specialist service for people with brain injury
Phone (02) 9748 7372
www.abis.org.au

Australian Capital Territory

ADACAS (ACT Disability Aged Carer Advocacy Service)

provides free advocacy and information to people with disability
Phone: (02) 6242 5060
www.adacas.org.au

Victoria

Brain Injury Matters

is a self-advocacy and community education organisation run by and for people with brain injuries
Phone: (03) 9639 7222
www.braininjurymatters.org

Brainlink

is dedicated to improving the quality of life of people affected by brain injury
Phone (03) 9845 2950
Freecall 1800 677 579
www.brainlink.org.au

South Australia

Brain Injury SA

is the peak body in South Australia for people with brain injury, and those who care for them
Phone (08) 8217 7600
1300 733 049 (Country callers)
www.braininjurysa.org.au

Queensland and Western Australia

Synapse

provides a range of support services for people who have been impacted by brain injury
Freecall: 1800 673 074
www.synapse.org.au

Tasmania

Brain Injury Association of Tasmania

is a non-government, state-wide, not-for-profit organisation working for people with brain injury, their families, and other stakeholders
Phone: FreeCall 1300 BIATAS (1300 242 827) or (03) 6230 9800
www.biat.org.au

Northern Territory

Integrated disAbility Action

is the peak consumer organisation for Territorians with disability
Phone (08) 8948 5400
www.idainc.org.au