

Traumatic Brain Injury Symptom and Effects

Brain injuries cause a wide variety of symptoms resulting from damage to cells, blood vessels and nerves in the brain. Brain injury symptoms vary in occurrence and severity based on which part of the brain is affected and the extent of the damage.

Medical Symptoms

- Feeding and Nutrition – some children with brain injuries can't eat or drink on their own and may need support of a feeding tube placed either through the nose or in the stomach.
- Bowel and Bladder – some children are unable to control their bowel and bladder functions and may need to use a brief (disposable underwear), require catheterization, or medications.
- Respiratory – some children require a tracheostomy or ventilator support to ensure that they are getting a healthy supply of oxygen.
- Seizures can be present right after injury or sometimes develop weeks or years later.
- Autonomic dysfunction presents as significant increases in blood pressure, temperature, heart rate, sweating and muscle stiffening caused by irritation to the parts of the brain that regulate these functions.
- Sleep disturbances – children with brain injury can experience difficulties regulating sleep/wake cycles resulting in hypersomnia (daytime sleepiness), fatigue and difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep.
- Pain is managed with medication as well as complementary therapies such as music, aromatherapy, deep breathing, or massage.
- Nausea and vomiting

Physical Symptoms

- Dizziness and/or trouble with balance
- Numbness and tingling
- Spasticity (increased muscle tone/stiffness)
- Muscle weakness
- Difficulties coordinating movement
- Vision and hearing difficulties

Cognitive Symptoms

- Difficulty speaking or understanding
- Difficulty paying attention or concentrating
- Confusion or difficulty remembering people or day to day events
- Difficulty performing daily routines such as getting dressed
- Difficulty doing school work such as reading and writing
- Difficulty learning new information
- Difficulty starting and completing activities
- Difficulty making good decisions

Emotional/Behavioral Symptoms

- Abrupt mood swings
- Irritability
- Anger
- Flat or dull affect
- Depression or anxiety
- Physical aggression
- Swearing or making other inappropriate comments

[Appointment: 651-290-8707](#) [Refer a Patient: 651-325-2200](#) [Pediatric Expert Consult](#) [More Ways to Contact Us](#)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](#).