

## **\*Traumatic Brain Injury Fact Sheet**

### **Groups at Risk for a Traumatic Brain Injury**

- Males are about twice as likely as females to sustain a TBI.<sup>2</sup>
- The two age groups at highest risk for TBI are 0 to 4 year olds and 15 to 19 year olds.<sup>2</sup>
- Adults age 75 years or older have the highest rates of TBI-related hospitalization and death.<sup>2</sup>
- Certain military duties (e.g., paratrooper) increase the risk of sustaining a TBI.<sup>3</sup>
- African Americans have the highest death rate from TBI.<sup>2</sup>
- TBI hospitalization rates are highest among African Americans and American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN).<sup>4</sup>

### **What are the signs and symptoms of TBI?**

The signs and symptoms of a traumatic brain injury (TBI) can be subtle. Symptoms of a TBI may not appear until days or weeks following the injury or may even be missed as people may look fine even though they may act or feel differently.

Common signs and symptoms of TBI:

- Headaches or neck pain that do not go away;
- Difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions;
- Slowness in thinking, speaking, acting, or reading;
- Getting lost or easily confused;
- Feeling tired all of the time, having no energy or motivation;
- Mood changes (feeling sad or angry for no reason);
- Changes in sleep patterns (sleeping a lot more or having a hard time sleeping);
- Light-headedness, dizziness, or loss of balance;
- Urge to vomit (nausea);
- Increased sensitivity to lights, sounds, or distractions;
- Blurred vision or eyes that tire easily;
- Loss of sense of smell or taste; and
- Ringing in the ears.<sup>1</sup>

Children with a brain injury can have the same symptoms as adults, but it is often harder for them to let others know how they feel. Call your child's doctor if they have had a blow to the head and you notice any of these symptoms:

- Tiredness or listlessness;
- Irritability or crankiness (will not stop crying or cannot be consoled);
- Changes in eating (will not eat or nurse);
- Changes in sleep patterns;
- Changes in the way the child plays;
- Changes in performance at school;
- Lack of interest in favorite toys or activities;
- Loss of new skills, such as toilet training;
- Loss of balance or unsteady walking; or
- Vomiting.<sup>1</sup>

If you think you or someone you know has a TBI, contact your health care provider. Your health care provider can refer you to a neurologist, neuropsychologist, neurosurgeon, or specialist in rehabilitation

(such as a speech pathologist). Getting help soon after the injury by trained specialists may speed recovery.

### **References**

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Facts about concussion and brain injury, 1999.
2. Langlois JA, Rutland-Brown W, Thomas KE. Traumatic brain injury in the United States: emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Nation Center for Injury Prevention and Control; 2004.
3. Ivins BJ, Schwab K, Warden D, Harvey S, Hoilien M, Powell J, et al. Traumatic brain injury in U.S. army paratroopers: prevalence and character. *Journal of Trauma Injury, Infection and Critical Care* 2003;55(4):617-21.
4. Langlois JA, Kegler SR, Butler JA, et al. Traumatic brain injury-related hospital discharges: results from a fourteen state surveillance system, 1997. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports* 2003;52,SS-04:1-18.

\*All information taken from the CDC Web site. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/TBI.htm>.