Common Causes

Common causes of TBI include falls, motor vehicle accidents, sports related impact, and assaults. Activities that most commonly cause mild to moderate TBI in children and teens include:

• High impact team sports such as football, hockey, and soccer*
• High speed recreational activities such as biking, in-line skating, skiing and skateboarding*
• High-risk behaviors and “stunts” including car surfing (riding or jumping on top of a moving vehicle) and skitching (riding on a skateboard while being pulled behind a motor vehicle)
• Motor-vehicle accidents
• Physical violence and abuse

*NOTE: TBI can occur during any sport or recreational activity.

Common Symptoms of TBI/Concussion

Physical symptoms:
• Dizziness
• Balance trouble
• Headache
• Nausea
• Numbness/tingling
• Sensitivity to light
• Sensitivity to noise
• Visual problems
• Vomiting

Cognitive symptoms:
• Change in school performance
• Difficulty concentrating
• Difficulty remembering
• Feeling confused about recent events
• Feeling foggy
• Feeling dazed/stunned
• Forgetfulness
• Repeating questions
• Slow response time

Emotional symptoms:
• Irritability
• Increased emotions
• Loss of interest in favorite activities
• Sadness
• Nervousness

Sleep/energy symptoms:
• Drowsiness
• Fatigue
• Sleeping more than usual
• Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep

Recognizing TBI/Concussion Symptoms in Infants and Toddlers

• Changes in play or loss of interest in favorite activities
• Excessive crying (more than usual/child can’t be consoled)
• Loss of new skills such as walking or toilet training
• Refusal to eat or nurse
• Swelling of scalp or soft spot
• Listlessness (child feels floppy in your arms)

Prevention

Mild to moderate TBI/concussion can be prevented by following basic safety guidelines.

• Require children to wear helmets and/or protective gear when skating, riding bicycles, skiing, skateboarding or participating in other sports.
• Properly install and use car seats as required by law.
• Educate children and teens to always wear a seat belt.
• Children should sit in the back seat of the car until age 14.
• Check your home for possible dangers and use safety products to prevent accidents.
• Only allow children to play in a safe and supervised environment.
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)/Concussion Clinic

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is an injury to the brain that may result in an impairment of cognitive abilities, physical functioning and/or disturbance of behavioral or emotional functioning.

TBI may be caused by a jolt or blow to the head that is severe enough to cause bruising, bleeding, swelling, or shearing. Multiple terms are often used to refer to brain injury including traumatic brain injury, acquired brain injury, head injury, concussion or abusive head trauma.

If you suspect your child has a TBI, contact your child’s doctor immediately. Treatment varies widely based upon the type and severity of injury.

Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU (CHoR) Multidisciplinary TBI/Concussion Clinic

The CHoR TBI/concussion clinic serves children who have been seen in the hospital, ER, or physician’s office for a brain injury.

The comprehensive clinic helps children and families through every step of the recovery process, from the management of neurological symptoms to addressing school and social issues.

The multidisciplinary team includes:
• Certified brain injury specialists
• Physical medicine and rehabilitation physicians
• Certified ImPACT consultants
• Neuro-psychologists
• Sports medicine physicians
• Registered nurses
• Rehabilitation therapists
• Social workers
• Educational consultants

Impact Certified Center

CHoR is proud to be an ImPACT Certified Center. ImPACT (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) is the first, most-widely used, and most scientifically validated computerized concussion evaluation system. ImPACT provides baseline testing and post-concussion testing. This type of concussion assessment can help to objectively evaluate the concussed athlete’s post-injury condition and track recovery for safe return to play, thus preventing the cumulative effects of concussion. It is used by numerous professional football teams, high schools, colleges and hospitals.

Appointments and Location

804-228-5818
TDD via Virginia Relay Center: 1-800-828-1120
Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU - Brook Road Campus
2924 Brook Road
Richmond, VA 23220

CHoR Brain Injury Support Group

CHoR offers a brain injury support group for parents and caregivers on the fourth Monday of the month from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on the Brook Road Campus. For more information contact Diane Mattingly, LCSW at 804-228-5203.

Additional Resources

Brain Injury Association
1-800-444-6433 • www.biausa.org
Brain injury Association of Virginia
804-355-5748 • www.biav.net
ImPACT
www.impacttest.com
www.impacttest.com/doctors/id/757