

Brain Injury Awareness Month

Brain Injury Awareness Month, recognized in March, provides an important opportunity to bring attention to the prevention of traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and promote strategies to improve the quality of life for both persons living with TBI and their families. Use hashtag #BIAMonth to bring attention to this effort in March.

A TBI is an injury that affects how the brain works. It can be caused by a bump, blow, jolt to the head, or penetrating head injury. There are three main types of TBI: mild TBI (or concussion), moderate TBI, and severe TBI. Depending on the severity of the injury, those who get a TBI may face health problems that last from a few days to the rest of their lives.¹

Since 2000, the Department of Defense (DoD) reported nearly 450,000 cases of TBI among service members who sustained injuries during military training, deployment, and day-to-day activities.

The DoD classifies 82.3 percent of TBIs as mild, 9.7 percent as moderate, and 8 percent as severe/penetrating or not classifiable.² Explore the table below to understand how the DoD defines a mild, moderate, and severe TBI. One criterion needs to be present for classification.

| Criteria | Mild | Moderate | Severe |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| CT Scan | Normal/ Not Needed | Abnormal | Abnormal |
| Loss of Consciousness | 0-30 min | > 30 min and < 24 hours | > 24 hours |
| Confusion or disorientation | a moment up to 24 hours | > 24 hours. | > 24 hours |
| Memory Loss | < 24 hours | >1 day and < 7 days | > 7 days |

Recognizing and Treating a Traumatic Brain Injury

Often called the signature injury of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is important to recognize the symptoms of TBI in Airmen and Guardians and encourage treatment from a healthcare provider.

Symptoms of TBI

- Vision problems
- Bothered by light or noise
- Attention or concentration problems
- Problems with short- or long-term memory
- Trouble thinking clearly
- Anxiety or nervousness
- Dizziness or balance problems



- Irritability or easily angered
- Feeling more emotional
- Sadness
- Trouble falling asleep
- Sleeping less/more than usual
- Severe and/or constant headaches
- Headache pain causing nausea or vomiting

Proper care after sustaining a TBI is critical for recovery. The sooner the TBI is diagnosed, the sooner treatment and recovery can begin. Treatments for TBIs are symptom-based. Mental health medical providers will consider the practicality of treatment, including when service members are in combat settings, and can adjust treatment as necessary.

Resources



TBI Multimedia Resources
The Center of Excellence for Medical Multimedia (CEMM) provides videos and information on TBIs for Airmen, Guardians, and caregivers. The CEMM highlights severe, moderate, and mild cases of TBI.

[CEMM > Programs > Traumatic Brain Injury \(af.mil\)](#)



Extending TBI care to Veterans and More

People over the age of 75 account for the highest rates of TBI-related hospitalizations.

In addition to falls among older adults, the CDC provides TBI resources related to firearms, suicide prevention, assaults, and motor vehicle safety.

[TBI Research and Programs | Concussion | Traumatic Brain Injury | CDC Injury Center](#)



Department of Defense TBI Special Report

The Department of Defense has created a report that highlights information on TBIs and promotes research to improve diagnosis and treatment.

[Traumatic Brain Injury \(defense.gov\)](#)

¹ Definition of TBI from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, https://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/get_the_facts.html

² DOD TBI Worldwide Numbers retrieved from <https://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Centers-of-Excellence/Traumatic-Brain-Injury-Center-of-Excellence/DOD-TBI-Worldwide-Numbers>