

FACT SHEET

Acquired Brain Injury

What is Acquired Brain Injury?

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) is a non-degenerative injury to the brain that has occurred since birth. It can be caused by an external physical force or by metabolic derangement. The term “acquired brain injury” includes traumatic brain injuries such as open or closed head injuries, and non-traumatic brain injuries - such as those caused by strokes and other vascular accidents, tumours, infectious diseases, hypoxia, metabolic disorders (e.g., liver and kidney diseases or diabetic coma), and toxic products taken into the body through inhalation or ingestion.

How is it manifested?

- inability to concentrate
- misunderstands instructions
- forgets instructions
- tires easily
- difficulty learning new information or concepts
- difficulty planning complex tasks
- difficulty organizing ideas
- difficulty organizing school materials
- difficulty getting started on tasks
- easily distracted by surrounding activities

Brain injury may occur in one of two ways:

- Closed brain injuries occur when there is a non-penetrating injury to the brain with no break in the skull. A closed brain injury is caused by a rapid forward or backward movement and shaking of the brain inside the bony skull that results in bruising and tearing of the brain tissue and blood vessels. Closed brain injuries are usually caused by car accidents and falls. Shaking a baby

can also result in this type of injury (Shaken Baby Syndrome).

- Penetrating, or open head injuries occur when there is a break in the skull, such as when an object pierces the brain.

Who is affected?

Each year, 2 million people in the U.S.A. experience a brain injury, and 99,000 suffer from long-term disability. Over five million people today are living with an ABI-related disability

Recovery:

Most studies suggest that once brain cells are destroyed or damaged, generally, they do not regenerate. Recovery after brain injury can take place in some cases, however, as other areas of the brain compensate for the injured tissue, or the brain learns to reroute information and function around the damaged areas. The exact amount of recovery is not predictable at the time of injury and may be unknown for months or even years. Each brain injury and rate of recovery is unique. Recovery from a severe brain injury often involves a prolonged or life-long process of treatment and rehabilitation.

Additional Resources:

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS PROGRAM
ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY PROGRAM
250 Dundas Street West, Suite 305
Toronto, Ontario
CANADA
M5T 2Z5
Telephone: 416-506-9888
Fax: 416-506-0374
Email: TorontoCCAC@Toronto.ccac-ont.ca