

## Traumatic brain injury: Effects on speech

### What is traumatic brain injury?

Traumatic brain injury (often called TBI) occurs when there is damage to the brain. The injury may or may not result in a loss of consciousness. The effect of traumatic brain injury may differ from person to person. The short- and long-term effects will vary based on severity of the injury, age at the time of injury, and abilities before the injury.

### What should I expect?

Effects may include one or more of the following:

- trouble with word-finding
- short-term memory loss
- disorganization of thoughts and speech
- difficulty understanding information
- impaired social skills
- weakness in face muscles
- trouble producing speech sounds
- trouble saying words
- eating and swallowing problems
- changes in attention
- mood swings
- trouble showing emotion
- impulsiveness (acting before thinking)
- change in energy level
- confusion

It is important to remember that your child can continue to have changes with the above effects over time.

### What can I do to help my child?

- Speak slowly and clearly to your child.
- Use short sentences.
- Break directions down into smaller steps.
- Repeat directions as necessary.
- Allow your child extra time to respond.
- Allow your child extra time to complete tasks.
- Let your child rest or nap often.
- Be patient.
- Expect frustration for you and your child.
- Encourage routines and schedules. Try writing the schedule down or drawing it for your child.
- Avoid distractions (such as TV, radio, clutter).

### What else do I need to know?

You and your child may benefit from the services of many different professionals and agencies during recovery, including:

- child life specialists
- doctors
- neuropsychologists
- occupational therapists
- physical therapists
- school and county services
- speech-language pathologists
- support groups

## Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the nearest Children's Developmental and Rehabilitation department.

Children's - Minneapolis  
(612) 813-6709

Children's - St. Paul  
(651) 220-6880

Children's Clinics - Woodwinds  
(651) 232-6860

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(952) 930-8630

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: [www.childrensmn.org](http://www.childrensmn.org).

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