

ABOUT BIC

The Brain Injury Connection (BIC) is a **501(c)(3)** organization located in the San Francisco Bay Area of Northern California. BIC's mission is to enrich the lives of people affected by an acquired brain injury (ABI) through education and connection to community resources.



The ultimate goal of the BIC is to meet the direct needs of those affected by an ABI. We want people affected by ABI to know immediately that they are not alone and there are resources available to them.

We also work with brain injury specialists to help us enhance doctor-patient relationships and the public's perception of brain injury.

BIC strives to contribute to existing programs to help them further their missions through our fundraising efforts, and initiate programs where they are needed but do not exist.

Initial programs & services of the BIC include:

- A publication where those affected by brain injury guide the content, with articles written by medical and legal specialists
- An educational and community website that connects those affected by brain injury to information and resources

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Brain Aneurysm Foundation

www.bafound.org

Brain Injury Association of America

www.biausa.org

Brain Tumor Foundation

www.braintumor.org

Epilepsy Foundation

www.epilepsyfoundation.org

Meningitis Association (National)

www.nmaus.org

Organization for Rare Disorders (National)

www.rarediseases.org

Stroke Association (American)

www.strokeassociation.org

MORE RESOURCES

Legal Resources

lawyers.findlaw.com

Caregiver Resources

www.caregiver.org

Independent Living

www.ilru.org

Brain Injury



Connection

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WHAT IS A BRAIN INJURY?

Any event that causes damage to brain tissues is considered a brain injury.

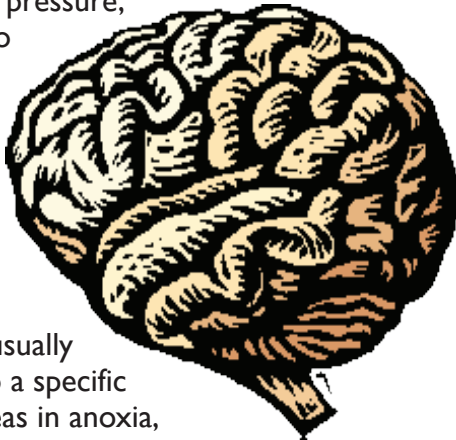
There are two general categories of brain injury:

- Congenital (before or during birth)
- Acquired (injury after birth)

Damage can result from a traumatic brain injury (TBI), stroke, brain tumor, lack of oxygen to the brain (near drowning or heart attack), degenerative illness (Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis), or encephalopathy (from infection, metabolic changes, increased intracranial pressure, exposure to toxins, radiation, or poor nutrition).

In a stroke or tumor the damage is usually localized to a specific area, whereas in anoxia, encephalopathy, degenerative diseases or a TBI, damage is much more widespread which means the symptoms may be more severe and complex.

For example, most people with brain injury will have some difficulty with memory, but in a TBI, there may also be problems with language, organization, and social issues.



COMMON SYMPTOMS

Brain injuries are as individual as the person who was injured. The short and long-term effects of a brain injury vary widely depending on the cause, the location of the injury, and severity. Some of the more common symptoms include:

Physical

- Weakness or numbness
- Loss of coordination
- Fatigue or sleep disorders
- Headache, nausea or vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Seizures

Cognitive

- Memory or attention problems
- Slow processing of information
- Lack of awareness/denial
- Decreased initiation
- Inability to shift mental tasks
- Difficulty planning/organizing
- Poor decision-making
- Language difficulties

Perceptual/Sensory

- Changes in vision, hearing, smell, taste, or sense of touch
- Dizziness or loss of balance
- Disorientation or confusion

Behavioral and Emotional

- Depression or anxiety
- Agitation or irritability
- Mood changes
- Lack of inhibition

The above list is not exhaustive. Even if the symptoms are mild or atypical, every brain injury is a serious medical condition that requires prompt attention and diagnosis. Diagnosis of a brain injury can be complex, since numerous other conditions (such as depression or epilepsy) can have similar symptoms.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Support groups can be helpful in dealing with many health issues. They are consumer oriented and provide peer support. No one understands better what you're going through than those whose lives have also been affected.

Benefits of participating in a support group include:

- **Emotional healing** through validation—you are not alone!
- **A safe environment** to discuss brain injury issues
- **Education** from the exchange of information & experiences
- **Connection** to resources participants have found helpful
- **Encouragement** that those affected by brain injury can have an excellent quality of life

To find a support group:

- **Contact** your physician, social worker or case manager for a referral;
- **Locate** your regional or state brain injury advocacy organization by searching the website of the national advocacy organization for your type of brain injury (see other side of brochure)
- **Search** the BIC website at:
www.braininjuryconnection.org

Prior to attending a support group, contact the facilitator to confirm the date, time and location, and determine whether this is the best group to meet your needs. The facilitator will then expect you at the meeting and introduce you to the participants.