

Did you know ...

Each year in Canada, 34,000 people are admitted to hospital with brain injuries – that's over 100 people injured per day.⁴

Twice as many males as females experience head injuries.⁴

In Alberta, the average age for hospitalization with a head injury is 33 years old.⁵

PROTECT YOUR HEAD

It's the only one you have

What is a Brain Injury?

The brain is the body's control centre and, if damaged, will suffer serious problems. A blow to the skull, penetration of the skull, diseases or infection, lack of oxygen to the brain and substance abuse can all lead to brain injury.¹

Brain injuries can result in²:

- Memory loss
- Behavioural or personality changes
- Dependence on others
- Movement disorders
- Paralysis
- Change in vision, hearing or sense of touch
- Persistent headaches or seizures
- Anger and impulse control problems
- Loss of motor function
- Impaired speech
- Loss of consciousness
- And, death

Causes and Prevention of Brain Injuries

Motor-vehicle collisions: In a vehicle, wear seatbelts, obey speed limits and never drink and drive.

Sport and Recreation Activities: Wear an approved helmet when participating in sports or leisure activities such as hockey, cycling, inline skating and football.

Diving: Never dive into unknown or shallow water. Never dive alone and avoid using alcohol around swimming pools or lakes

Falls: Clear obstacles such as toys, clothes and boxes from all stairs and pathways. Ensure sidewalks and driveways are clear of ice and snow, and make sure your footwear has proper grips for the winter.

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1 Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital (1993). Brain Injury - Coping with the results of brain injury
 2 TPN: Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure (1997). <http://www.tbi.org/html/prevention.html>
 3 Canadian Brain Injury Coalition. (1997) Concussion information card
 4 Canadian Brain Injury Coalition. Brain Injury in Canada (1999). <http://www.cbic.ca/english/faq.html>
 5 Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research (1997). inpatient hospitalizations
 6 Child Safety Update. BC Ministry of Health

Shaken Baby Syndrome is the result of shaking or quick motion that makes a baby's head roll or snap back and forth. This may cause serious brain injury or even death.⁶

Occupational Hazards: Wear hard hats on the job where injury from falling objects or contact with electrical conductors could occur.

Violence and Assault: A hit or slap to the head, a gunshot wound or even shaking a person can lead to serious brain injury.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

A concussion is a change in mental status caused by a blow to the head and may involve loss of consciousness.

You do not need to lose consciousness to have a concussion.

Watch for these signs for possible concussion:³

- Vacant stares
- Delayed verbal and motor responses – slow to answer questions or follow instructions
- Confusion and easily distracted
- Slurred or incoherent speech
- Lack of coordination such as stumbling or inability to walk in a straight line
- Memory loss
- Any period of loss of consciousness or unresponsiveness

Anyone who has suffered a possible concussion should see a doctor because many brain injuries show no physical signs of injury.

A brain injury is forever – prevention is the best defence.

Brain injury prevention in Alberta is a shared responsibility.

If you would like more information on this topic, contact:

Brain Injury Association of Alberta (BIAA) • phone 1-888-533-5355 •
<http://www.cadvision.com/biaa/>

Northern Alberta Brain Injury Association (NABIS) • phone 1-800-425-5552

The Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research (ACICR) provides coordination and support for organizations and professionals in injury control.
phone (780) 492-6019 • fax (780) 492-7154 • acicr@ualberta.ca

To receive additional copies of this Act sheet, contact the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research or check out our website at www.med.ualberta.ca/acicr

