

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Awareness



U.S. Marine Corps photo by
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DID YOU KNOW?

The majority of TBIs that service members and veterans sustained between 2000 and 2013 were diagnosed outside of combat. Falls and motor vehicle/transportation crashes are the two leading causes of TBIs — both of which are preventable.

WHAT IS A TBI?

- A TBI is a blow or jolt to the head that disrupts the normal function of the brain. It may knock you out briefly or for an extended period of time, or make you feel confused or “see stars.” Not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI.
- A TBI can be mild, moderate, severe or penetrating.
- The most common form of TBI in the military is mild, more commonly known as a concussion.

HOW WIDESPREAD IS THE PROBLEM?

Since 2000, more than 294,000 service members have sustained a TBI. Nationwide, Americans sustained more than 2.5 million TBIs in 2010, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.¹

WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE FOR SERVICE MEMBERS?

Young men between the ages of 18 to 24 are at greatest risk for TBI. Many activities, which are routine in the military, are physically demanding and potentially dangerous. In addition, service members enjoy exciting leisure activities: They ride motorcycles, climb mountains and sky-dive. Sports are an integral part of the active-duty service member's everyday life — all of which can increase the risk for TBI.



DoD Numbers for Traumatic Brain Injury Total Worldwide TBI Diagnoses



Source: Defense Medical Surveillance System (DMSS), Theater Medical Data Store (TMDS) provided by the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center (AFHSC)

Prepared by the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC)

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¹Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/

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Causes of TBI Diagnosed at Military Treatment Facilities 2000-2013²



² TBI numbers for the external causes of injury are for active components only. These numbers do not include repeat TBI encounters in garrison. Percentages have been rounded. ³ Battle injury refers to injuries from enemy action, including late effects which can occur any time after injury. Source: Defense Medical Surveillance System as of Sept. 17, 2013. Prepared by Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO GET CHECKED OUT?

- The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you can return to your normal routine. Toughing it out can prolong recovery or lead to long-term problems that could have been avoided.
- Your health care provider can help treat your symptoms and advise you on how to return to your regular activities safely and gradually.
- If you sustain another concussion before you recover from the first, it is more likely that you will have long-term problems.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS IT COULD CAUSE

- The brain controls many functions, such as memory and concentration, that can affect how you perform on the job. This can impact unit readiness and create problems in your private life.
- Those who have had a concussion are at increased risk for another one if they are experiencing dizziness, balance problems or fatigue. All of these symptoms could cause them to fall and reinjure themselves.

Most people recover completely within three months. A small percentage of people may have ongoing symptoms that should be addressed by a health care provider.