



Depression after Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

**What
Is
Depression?**

Depression is a health problem that makes people feel sad, hopeless, or empty over a long period of time.

How Common Is Depression After TBI?

Half of all people with a TBI will have depression within the first year after a TBI.

Nearly two thirds of people with a TBI will have depression within 7 years after a TBI.

What Causes Depression After a TBI?

Physical changes in the brain caused by the TBI. The TBI may affect the parts of the brain that control your emotions.

An emotional response to the TBI. People may struggle to adjust to life with a disability.

Factors that are not related to the TBI. These may include family history or other influences that were there before the TBI.

Changes in your lifestyle caused by the TBI. Not being able to work or do other things you used to do may be frustrating or disappointing.

How to Treat Depression After a TBI



Get help from a professional as soon as you can. Treatments include:



Medicines called antidepressants



Counseling



Medicine plus counseling

How to Find Help

Mental health providers.

You can go to a psychiatrist (psy·chi·a·trist), a psychologist, a social worker or a licensed professional counselor for help.

You can contact

Doctors and nurse practitioners with experience treating depression.

These include psychiatrists (phys·iat·rist; rehabilitation doctors), neurologists, primary care doctors, and qualified nurse practitioners. They can start your treatment.

TBI support groups.

These groups are a good source of information and support after a TBI.

If you have strong thoughts of death or suicide, get help right away. Call a local crisis line or 911. You can also call the National Crisis Hotline, which is open 24 hours a day, at 988. You can also go to an emergency room.

Source: The infographic was adapted from Depression after Traumatic Brain Injury factsheet developed by Jesse Fann, MD, MPH, and Tessa Hart, PhD, in collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center. (<https://msktc.org/>).

Disclaimer: This information is not meant to replace the advice of a medical professional. You should consult your health care provider regarding specific medical concerns or treatment. The contents of the infographic were developed under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number 90DPKT0008). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this infographic do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, or HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

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