



the brain injury association

Brain injury explained



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What is a brain injury?

An acquired brain injury, or ABI, refers to any injury caused to the brain since birth.

What causes brain injury?

A brain injury can happen to anyone, at any time and can be caused by trauma (for example following a road traffic collision, fall or assault), stroke, tumour, haemorrhage, infection, or lack of oxygen.

How common is brain injury?

We all think 'it will never happen to me', but each year around 350,000 people in the UK are admitted to hospital with an ABI. That's one every 90 seconds. The majority of these people will need some form of support or rehabilitation.

What help is available?

Headway works to improve life after brain injury, helping people to relearn lost skills and regain a degree of independence while providing support to families and carers.

We do this through the provision of a range of frontline services that are available at every stage of the journey – from supporting families at the bedside through to helping people rebuild their lives.

"I'm no longer the person I once was, but I'm now working on a new me."

Debra Jones



What are the effects of brain injury?

Our brains control everything we do, think and feel, so an injury of any form can impact every aspect of our lives.

The effects of brain injury can vary depending on the type, location and severity of the injury. No two injuries are the same, and the impact and longevity of the symptoms are notoriously hard to predict.

While some people go on to make good recoveries, others will need support for the rest of their lives.

Common effects of brain injury include:

Physical: Weakness or paralysis; co-ordination and balance issues; sensory impairment; fatigue; speech problems; epilepsy.

Behavioural: Disinhibition; impulsiveness; obsessive behaviour; irritability and aggression; apathy.

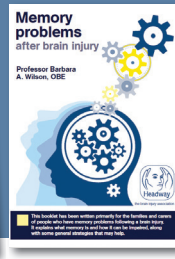
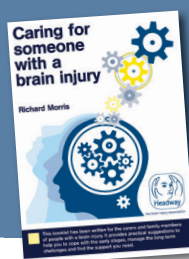
Emotional: Personality change; mood swings; depression and sense of loss; anxiety; anger and frustration; PTSD.

Cognitive: Memory problems; language loss; reduced concentration span; inability to process information; impaired reasoning; lack of insight or empathy.

Hormonal imbalances: Depression; sexual difficulties, such as impotence or an altered sex drive; mood swings; weight gain.

Headway offers an award-winning range of free-to-access publications covering many of the symptoms and practical issues associated with a brain injury.

Download copies from www.headway.org.uk/information-library or contact the nurse-led helpline on 0808 800 2244 or helpline@headway.org.uk



Headway

– improving life after brain injury

For more information about brain injury or the support available, visit **www.headway.org.uk** or call the nurse-led helpline on **0808 800 2244**.

For general enquiries, call 0115 924 0800 or email enquiries@headway.org.uk.



"I've learned that there is life after brain injury. It won't be the same as my old life, but I want to move forward."

Harriet Barnsley

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