

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AFTER YOUR HEAD'S BEEN HURT

There are many ways our heads can get hurt. A fall, a car accident, or any sort of blow or jolt to the head can cause a **concussion** which is sometimes called a “mild brain injury” or “mild traumatic brain injury”.

Most people who hurt their heads get well and don't experience long term problems. For others, this sort of injury might affect the way they function. The changes might not be noticed for several weeks or months after the injury. This flyer lists common problems that you might experience after a concussion or mild brain injury. If any of the problems on the following list are new for you - and THEY DO NOT GO AWAY - see the “What to Do” box on the back of this sheet.

Health

Headaches and Pain

- *Headaches that keep coming back*
- *Unexplained body pain including the shoulders, neck, and/or face*

Balance Problems

- *Dizziness*
- *Trouble balancing*
- *Tripping or falling often*



Sensory Changes

- *Bothered by smells, lights, or sounds*
- *Changes in taste or smell or appetite*
- *Blurry or double vision*

Sleep Problems

- *Change in sleep patterns: can't sleep through the night, need naps*
- *Feeling tired and drowsy*
- *Getting nights and days mixed up*

Immediate Medical Attention Required

Go to the Emergency Room or call your doctor if you suddenly experience any of the following:

- Seizures (convulsions) or fixed stares
- Pupils that are different sizes
- Blood or clear liquid from the nose or ears
- Repeated vomiting
- Sharply increased confusion, agitation, restlessness
- Severe headaches that get worse
- Loss of consciousness
- Weakness or numbness in arms or legs
- Slurred speech

Personality, Mood & Behavior

- *Sad or depressed, anxious or restless*
- *Easily upset or frustrated, irritable*
- *Mood swings*
- *Taking risks without thinking first*
- *Starting to use or reacting differently to alcohol or drugs*
- *Trouble “getting started” when there's something to be done*

Thinking

- *Trouble remembering things or paying attention*
- *Reacting or thinking slowly*
- *Problems learning new things*
- *Feeling uncertain when making decisions*
- *Difficulty planning, starting, or finishing a task*
- *Easily confused or mixed up*



Communication

- *Having a hard time staying on topic*
- *Trouble thinking of the right word*
- *Difficulty understanding what is said or what is read*
- *Problems following conversations*
- *Not getting your point across clearly*
- *Trouble on the job*

What To Do

If you experience the symptoms listed and they don't go away:

- Talk with your doctor about a referral to a specialist in brain injury.
- A Board-Certified Neuropsychologist is one of these specialists - they can help you understand and deal with changes in behavior and emotions.
- Contact the **Hawai'i Neurotrauma Registry Project** for information about brain injury and to find resources in Hawai'i.

Phone: (808) 692-1375 or

Toll-free: 1-866-447-9023

E-mail: HawaiiNT@hawaii.edu

jabsom.hawaii.edu/pbrrtc



Hawai'i Neurotrauma Registry

Holu Lehua (resilient lehua)

Like the lehua, people with neurotrauma injuries are resilient.

We have only listed the most common symptoms of a mild brain injury. Not every problem that could happen is on these lists. Sometimes you might not see these changes in yourself but they might be noticed by those you are close to, such as family, friends or co-workers.

It is important to seek help if any of these symptoms are present and do not go away.



Developed by the Brain Injury Association of Virginia (BIAV). Supported in whole by grant #10-171 from the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative (CNI) Trust Fund