

TYPES OF HEAD INJURY

Open Head Injury

Open head injuries occur when the skull has been broken and the brain exposed. This may damage the brain tissue immediately below the fracture causing loss of consciousness as well as more generalised damage as in a closed head injury.

Closed Head Injury

A closed head injury occurs when the head is struck but the skull is not penetrated or fractured. Even so someone can lose consciousness and the brain can be seriously damaged.

Post Concussional Syndrome

Symptoms such as headache, dizziness, deafness, ringing in the ears, memory impairment and short attention span may occur after minor head injury. These symptoms vary from person to person but are labelled Post Concussional syndrome. Explanation and advice should be sought from your local doctor who may refer you to a neurologist.

Minor Head Injury

A minor head injury may occur if the head is moved violently or struck. Hospitalisation may not be necessary and sometimes there is no loss of consciousness. Even so, some people experience behavioural and cognitive problems, which can interfere with their lives as a result. It is important to get information to understand the possible effects this may have on you.

POSSIBLE CAUSES OF A HEAD INJURY

Accidents

motor vehicle accidents
sporting or work accidents
farming accidents
assaults

Lack of Oxygen

drowning
blood loss from accident
childbirth
severe asthma attack

Poisoning

alcohol
illegal drug
overdose
neurotoxicity

Stroke

Apoplexy, rupture of a blood vessel in the brain resulting in loss of consciousness, often followed by paralyses, or embolism of thrombosis affecting a cerebral vessel.

Infections

Meningitis
Encephalitis

Brain Tumours

Cancerous and non cancerous.

TERMS YOU MAY HEAR

RETROGRADE AMNESIA

This is when a person cannot remember a period of time before the accident

CONCUSSION

Concussion is a type of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) caused by a blow or jolt to the head. Brief periods of unconsciousness result from shock and jarring to the brain.

POST-TRAUMATIC AMNESIA (PTA)

This stage after the damage has occurred in which a person may appear to be conscious and rational but afterwards cannot remember anything that happened. PTA is often used to estimate the severity of the injury.

General guidelines are:

Less than one hour	PTA – mild
One – 24 hours	PTA – moderate
More than 24 hours	PTA - severe

COMA

Coma is a prolonged state of unconsciousness

WHAT IS ACQUIRED BRAIN IMPAIRMENT

Acquired brain impairment (ABI) is damage that has occurred sometime after birth. It is not the same as an intellectual disability. Other terms you may hear:

ABD:	Acquired brain damage
TBI:	Traumatic brain damage
HI:	Head Injury
ACI:	Acquired cerebral insult
ARBD:	Alcohol related brain damage