

Brain injury: Changes in your child

Brain injury's can affect personality and many different parts of the body. Children and teens who have a moderate to severe brain injury may have physical and emotional problems. They may also have trouble thinking and focusing. These changes may last days, weeks, or months.

What physical changes can a brain injury cause?

- Headaches
- Sensitivity to light and noise
- Higher risk for seizures
- Sensory problems
- Difficulty with balance and coordination
- Hearing or vision changes or problems
- Changes in muscle tone
- Trouble controlling heart rate and blood pressure
- Difficulty swallowing and chewing
- Difficulty talking and communicating
- Loss of bowel and bladder control
- Tiring easily
- Hormone changes

What mental changes can a brain injury cause?

- Decreased attention and alertness
- Orientation problems (not knowing where or who they are)
- Cognitive or mental fatigue (less able to concentrate and focus on an activity)
- Memory problems (usually problems with new memories)
- Difficulty learning something new
- Less ability to reason and make safe decisions and judgments
- Lack of social awareness (problems understanding how their actions affect others)



- Problems with executive functioning, including:
 - Problem-solving
 - Self-regulation
 - Planning and organization
 - Self-monitoring
 - Emotional control
 - Working memory

What behavioral changes can a brain injury cause?

- Impulsiveness
- Perseveration (per-sev-er-AY-shun) (getting stuck on an idea, word, or request)
- Agitation
- Easy to frustrate
- Irritable
- Self-centered
- Aggression or violent behavior

What emotional changes can a brain injury cause?

- Exaggerated personality
- Flat affect (very little emotional expression)
- Emotional lability (mood swings)
- Laughing or crying at the wrong times
- Depression
- Anxiety

What sleep changes can a brain injury cause?

- Sleeping more than usual
- Drowsy or tiring easily with daily routine
- Trouble falling asleep
- Trouble staying asleep

When will I notice these changes in my child?

You may notice changes weeks, months or even years after your child's brain injury. Changes depend on the part of the brain injured, your child's age, and their brain development at the time of injury.

Your child's healthcare provider will discuss how brain injuries may disrupt developmental stages. Talk with them if your child has any of these issues. They can help you develop a plan to help your child recover and succeed.

Notes

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