

If you need help with this booklet,
take it to your support worker or doctor.

Recovering from brain injury



**When your brain is healthy,
you are more likely to feel good.**

When your brain is injured, it can be scary.

You may not feel like yourself.

There are ways to help your brain recover.

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Your brain

Your brain controls nearly everything in your body. It is responsible for:

- your thoughts and emotions
- making sense of your senses – what you see, what you hear ...
- movement and balance
- how you communicate
- how you respond to stress.

Brain injury

Your brain can be injured by:

- bumps or bangs to the head
- shaking that rattles your head
- pressure to your neck
- other actions that make it hard to breathe.

Most brain injuries will get better with time, but you may still experience some lasting problems.



Symptoms

Brain injuries can cause many different symptoms.

Some people with brain injuries say:

Life felt very overwhelming.

My neck felt tight, and my head throbbed all the time.

I felt dizzy and off-balance, like I was drunk.

I couldn't read and I forgot people's names.

Normal noises, like my children playing, were stressful and I couldn't cope.

I didn't like going outside because the bright light made my head hurt.

My mind and body felt like they weren't connected, and I kept bumping into things.

I felt stressed and tired after doing small things, like cooking dinner.



Getting medical advice



If you experience any of the things listed below, it's a good idea to go to the emergency department or call 000:

- if you feel worse
- you pass out or feel dizzy
- you become confused
- you vomit repeatedly
- it is hard for others to wake you
- you have any fits or spasms
- you have slurred speech
- you feel weakness or numbness in any part of your body
- you have fluid or blood come out of your ears or nose.

If you hurt your head some time ago but you still don't feel right, book an appointment with your doctor.

A doctor can help you find ways to manage specific things that are bothering you or refer you on for more specialised help.



Looking after your brain

Looking after your brain also means looking after your safety. If you are worried someone is going to hurt you again, you can get free support from:

 **1800RESPECT:**
1800 737 732

 **Full Stop:**
1800 385 578

You can also ask your support worker or doctor about things you can do to help your brain recover.



Things to help your brain heal



Rest

- Rest for at least 2 days after injuring your brain.
 - Slowly return to doing your usual activities.
 - When you feel bad, reduce the things you think about and do. You might:
 - talk to your manager about shorter workdays
 - ask for help around the house
 - spend less time at social events
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Good mental health

- be around people that make you feel relaxed
 - be kind to yourself
 - celebrate small wins to reduce stress
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Good nutrients

- eat healthy food
 - drink lots of water
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Staying connected

- stay connected to others
 - let other people support you, including friends, family and support workers
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Things that can hurt your brain



Getting injured again

- When your brain is injured, it can be easily hurt again
 - Each new brain injury puts you at greater risk of a permanent injury
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Constant stress and no rest

- High-stress situations can make your brain slower to recover
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Alcohol and recreational drugs

- Drugs and alcohol can slow recovery and can make you feel worse
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Sleeping pills

- Taking sleeping pills in the first two days after your injury can make you feel worse
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My recovery plan:

Who can I talk to about brain injury?

Trusted friends and family can be good support while you recover from a brain injury.

Staff at women's health centres in New South Wales can talk about brain injury.

My closest service:

To find your closest
women's health centre visit
whnsw.asn.au

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