

# Alaska Injury Prevention Facts: Traumatic Brain Injury — Early detection in children improves outcomes



## What can Alaskans do to prevent TBIs?

### Individuals and families can:

#### Prevent falls

- Install safety features at home, like window guards and stair gates and secure dressers and bookcases to the wall
- Add ice grips to shoes when needed
- Keep walkways clear of ice and snow
- Test eyesight and hearing annually



#### Play safely

- Follow age, size, and number of rider rules on ATVs and snowmachines
- Wear proper-fitting, sport-specific helmets for outdoor transportation activities like riding bicycles, ATVs, and snowmachines
- Wear sport-specific helmets for contact sports like football and ice hockey and winter sports like downhill skiing and snowboarding
- Talk to young athletes about ways to protect their brain
- Remove players from a practice or game after a hit to the head



#### Travel safely

- Always wear a seat belt
- Know your vehicle's maintenance procedures, like regular inspections to help prevent motor vehicle crashes
- Use car seats and booster seats for young children
- Wear flotation devices when boating or playing near water
- Never operate a vehicle of any kind after drinking alcohol or using drugs



Taking actions to prevent traumatic brain injuries, looking for signs and symptoms of injuries, and talking to a health care provider when needed all help protect children's brains and improve healthy development.

### In 2018, Traumatic Brain Injuries among Alaska children and teens were most often caused by:<sup>2,3</sup>



Falls



Car



ATV



Snowmachine

Motor Vehicle Crashes

#### What is traumatic brain injury?

Traumatic brain injury, often shortened to TBI, is an injury that affects how the brain works. TBI can be caused by a bump, blow, jolt or piercing injury to the head and can lead to disability and death.<sup>1</sup>

#### Why early detection is key in children

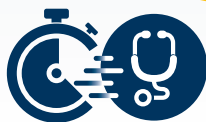
Following older adults, young children and adolescents had the highest number of new TBI cases in Alaska in 2018.<sup>2,3,4</sup> Falls and motor vehicle, all-terrain vehicle (ATV), or snowmachine crashes led to most of these injuries.<sup>2,3</sup> Early diagnosis and intervention is critical because brain injuries can affect the way children develop, play and learn. If left unnoticed, traumatic brain injuries can have long-term impacts on health, emotions, and behaviors.<sup>5</sup>

It can be difficult for professionals and families to recognize signs and symptoms of traumatic brain injuries in children.<sup>5</sup>

#### TBI signs and symptoms:

- May affect how children feel, think, act, or sleep
- Can look like other health problems
- May not appear right away, especially in children.<sup>1</sup>

A child with a possible TBI should be seen immediately by a health care provider.



Understanding the signs and symptoms of these injuries can help young people get the support and resources they need to get better more quickly.

### Health care providers can:

#### Screen and intervene

- Screen for TBIs, particularly in children who face higher chances of injury: ages 0–4 and 10–19
- Seek education about pediatric brain injuries
- Educate families about traumatic brain injuries

### Schools, organizations and decision-makers can:

#### Reduce assaults, a leading cause of TBIs

- Provide programs in schools and communities that teach healthy relationship skills
- Provide education on reporting sexual and physical assault
- Increase availability of services in rural and remote areas for people who've been assaulted
- Improve assault training for village police officers, tribal officers and public safety officers

## Alaska resources to learn more

### Help Alaskans find support after traumatic brain injuries

#### Alaska Brain Injury Network

Life after a brain injury can be challenging. The Alaska Brain Injury Network is a starting point for receiving support, sharing information about TBIs, weekly support groups, financial help and trainings.

#### Brain Injury Association of America — Alaska

The Brain Injury Association of America — Alaska provides information and resources about finding support groups, assistance programs including insurance support, independent living centers, parent training, victims of violent crime compensation, rehabilitation support for people with brain injuries and other disabilities, and more. The association also offers a **TBI information line at 800-444-6443**.

#### Connect with brain injury resources in your area:

##### Access Alaska

##### Daybreak

##### Maniilaq Association

##### Southeast Alaska Independent Living

These four agencies provide information, resources and help with disability services such as housing, employment, benefits, legal rights, and transportation to assist people who have experienced a brain injury. These agencies also offer peer support groups for people who have experienced head injuries. These support groups are also open to parents, families, and caregivers.

#### Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation

Find support to prepare for, get, and keep jobs.

#### Disability Law Center of Alaska

The Disability Law Center of Alaska provides legal advocacy for people with disabilities, including people with traumatic brain injuries.

## State of Alaska Injury Prevention Program

### Contact Us

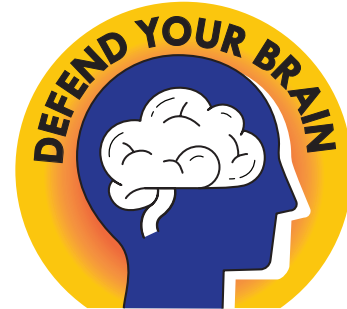
- **Web:**  
<https://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/InjuryPrevention/default.aspx>
- **Email:** [hss.injuryprevention@alaska.gov](mailto:hss.injuryprevention@alaska.gov)
- **Join the [Injury Prevention listserv](#)**



## Alaska Injury Prevention Facts: Traumatic Brain Injury — Early detection in children improves outcomes

### Share messages about traumatic brain injuries online

- Look for our Defend Your Brain social media posts on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). #DefendYourBrainAK



#### Prevent falls at home



#### Wear proper gear for a safer ride



Brain injuries  
affect the way  
people feel, think,  
act, or sleep.



The right-sized  
helmet helps  
protect your  
head



### References

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