



September 2015

### September: National Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Awareness Month

A TBI is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or a penetrating head injury, that affects the normal function of the brain. They can range from mild to severe.

- TBI is a major cause of death and disability in the U.S., contributing to 30% of all deaths from injury
- Falls are the leading cause of TBI
- Other causes include:
  - being hit by an object
  - sports injuries
  - motor vehicle accidents
  - explosions and other combat injuries
- The type, severity, and source of impact and the movement of the head (twisting, over bending of the neck etc.), can all influence the type and amount of damage done to the brain
- TBIs are rated mild, moderate, and severe. A mild TBI is also called a **concussion**
- A concussion can have many signs and symptoms. Common ones include:
  - headache
  - dizziness
  - nausea or vomiting
  - difficulty concentrating
  - loss of consciousness
  - fatigue or tiredness
  - blurred vision
  - sleeping too much or too little

**Seek medical care for anyone** that gets a blow to the head or body that causes any of the above symptoms or results in changes in behavior that cause you concern.

**Go to the Emergency Department or call 911 right away if:**

- ▶ Symptoms are getting worse
- ▶ The person looks very drowsy or cannot be awakened
- ▶ The pupil of one eye is larger than the other
- ▶ There are convulsions or seizures
- ▶ The person is getting more and more confused or agitated
- ▶ The person loses consciousness (even briefly)

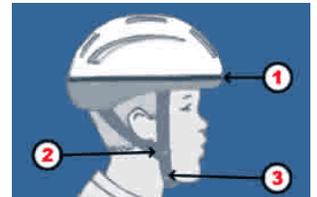
- Prevention is the best way to avoid a TBI:
  - use window guards and safety gates for kids
  - install bathroom handrails for seniors
  - safety belts and car seats for everyone
  - and, don't forget HELMETS

Want to know more? Here is a great resource from the Center for Disease Control about TBI's: <http://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/>

### Bike Helmet Fitting

Protect against head injuries by making sure you and your children's bike helmets are properly fitted. Look at the picture and follow these quick steps to check:

1. The helmet should sit evenly on the head. The helmet should cover the forehead with only two fingers width between the eyebrow and helmet.
2. The straps should form a V around the ear with the point meeting just below and forward of the ear.
3. Be sure the buckle works properly and that the strap is secure. You should only be able to fit one finger between the strap and the chin.
4. To do a final fit check, open your mouth like you are yawning. The helmet should push down on your head. If not, re-check the straps for tightness.



Check out this site for more information about helmet use including other sports and activities: <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/>

### Tech Corner

The official **American Red Cross** First Aid App



- Free for iPhone and Android
- Provides expert advice for everyday emergencies
- Gives you the information you need to handle the most common first aid emergencies
- Videos, interactive quizzes and simple step-by-step first instructions

<http://www.redcross.org/mobile-apps/first-aid-app>

## Back to School Backpack Safety



Here is some advice from the *American Academy of Pediatrics* to help prevent injuries carrying that backpack full of books:

- Be sure the pack has wide and padded shoulder straps and a padded back.
- Pack as light as you can. The heaviest items should be placed closest to the center of the back.
- Be sure you use all available compartments.
- The pack should never weigh more than 10-20 percent of your child's weight.
- Always use both straps. Carrying the pack with just one strap over a shoulder can strain muscles.
- If school rules allow it, try a rolling backpack. This works well if books are really heavy. Just remember they still may need to be carried up stairs and may not fit in lockers.

## Healthy Ideas for School Lunch Boxes

Here are some tips from the *American Heart Association* to make that mid-day meal healthier. And think about following these same tips for **your own lunches too!**

### Sandwich Smarts:

- Try using different breads like 100% whole wheat tortilla wraps or 100% whole wheat pita pockets.
- Add shredded carrots, slices of cucumber, or avocado slices along with lettuce on sandwiches.
- Steer clear of the highly processed lunch meats. Instead try a leftover grilled chicken breast sandwich.

### Let them Dunk — Make eating fun by:

- giving your kids apple and pear slices to dunk in low fat yogurt mixed with peanut butter
- or, pack some carrots, celery and sweet pepper strips to plunk in fresh salsa or homemade bean dip

**Let the Kids Help:** It might make more of a mess, but kids are more likely to eat their lunch if they help make it – and it's a great way to spend family time together!

## Stretches for your Neck, Upper Back and Shoulders

*If you find your neck and upper back get tight, these stretches might help. If they cause pain or make you feel worse, don't do them.*

### General guidelines for the following exercises

- Hold all stretches about 30 seconds
- Do two stretches on each side. Do not stretch to the point of pain
- Try to do these twice a day when your muscles are warm
- And make sure to breathe as you stretch!

1. Sit on Right hand to anchor arm and gently tilt head to Left until stretch felt along Right side of neck. Be sure head continues to face straight ahead and the only motion is the head tilting.



2. Looking straight ahead, rotate head to Right. Gently tilt head down so you are looking towards your Right armpit and can feel a stretch from the top of your Left shoulder blade up your neck.



3. Clasp hands in front of you and raise arms, gently tuck chin to chest until stretch is felt.



4. Bring arm across chest, placing other hand just above the elbow and pull arm to chest until stretch felt behind shoulder and across middle back. Make sure shoulders remain level and that torso does not rotate.

