



FACT SHEET

Brain Injury & Memory

*Do you
have
trouble
with
memory
since
your
brain
injury?*

What does this mean?

Memory is the ability to store, retain, and eventually recall information. Problems with memory are one of the most common complaints after a brain injury. Memory impairments can often interfere with many aspects of life, including home, social, and work activities. Examples of frequently affected activities include: Keeping dates and appointments, taking medications, remembering to do chores or errands, recalling information from a book/TV show/movie, and recalling personal events and conversations.

How might a brain injury affect memory?

Memory impairments may range from mild to severe depending on what areas of the brain were injured and the extent of the injury. The good news is that there are some aspects of memory that are usually unaffected after a brain injury, and there are strategies that may help those areas that are affected. The following are some of the many different types of memory.

Common examples of memory difficulties:

- ◆ **Short-term Memory:** The ability to recall recently learned information. This is the most common type of memory affected after brain injury.
- ◆ **Long-term Memory:** The ability to remember information about something that happened a long time ago. This type of memory is generally not affected after a brain injury.
- ◆ **Procedural Memory:** The ability to remember skills and procedures. This is sometimes known as “how to” knowledge. Many skills can be practiced and rehearsed to the point that they become part of procedural memory and can usually be carried out automatically without too much thought. This type of memory usually remains intact after a brain injury; however, creating new procedural memories after brain injury may require more time and practice.

Recommended strategies:

- ◆ Pay attention.
- ◆ Limit distractions.
- ◆ Be an active learner.
- ◆ Practice.
- ◆ Visualize.
- ◆ Make an emotional connection.
- ◆ Understand the information.
- ◆ Link new information to something familiar.
- ◆ Group similar information.
- ◆ Relax and sleep.
- ◆ Exercise.
- ◆ Use memory aides.
- ◆ Communicate with your doctor.
- ◆ Challenge yourself.

Sources: IU School of Medicine / Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana TBI Model Systems. Further, the information in this FACT SHEET is also based on a consensus of expert opinion of the Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana Departments of Neuropsychology and Resource Facilitation.

Disclaimer: This information is not meant to replace advice from a medical professional. You should consult your health care provider regarding specific medical concerns or treatments.

RHI Resource Facilitation Department
9531 Valparaiso Court • Indianapolis, Indiana 46268
Tel: (317) 329-2455 | Fax: (317) 872-0914