

Living With Brain Injury

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center

Formerly the Defense and Veterans Head Injury Program (DVHIP)

What are the risks and costs of traumatic brain injury (TBI) for military personnel and veterans?

- ♦ In prior conflicts, TBI was present in at least 14-20% of surviving combat casualties; preliminary information from the current conflict in the Middle East suggests that this number is now much higher.
- ♦ In peacetime, over 7,000 Americans with TBI are admitted to military and veterans hospitals each year.
- ♦ TBI is a major cause of life-long disability and death.
- ♦ Certain military assignments, such as airborne operations or policing in combat areas, carry above average risk for TBI.
- ♦ Blast injuries are a growing cause of TBI in combat.

What is the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC)?

DVBIC is a group of seven TBI Programs in Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and a civilian TBI rehabilitation program. These DVBIC sites work collaboratively to provide and improve TBI care for active duty military, veterans, and their eligible beneficiaries.

What is the goal of DVBIC?

Our goal is to provide expert case management and to insure individualized, evidence-based treatment for each patient to maximize function and decrease or eliminate disability. We work together to provide services and supports to help the individual with TBI return to duty, work and community.

What value is added to a site's TBI program from being a part of DVBIC?

Collaboration with DVBIC enhances a site's

- ♦ Communication among member programs
- ♦ Patient case management
- ♦ Clinical care practice
- ♦ Provider, patient and family education capability
- ♦ Funding for TBI research
- ♦ Access to collaborators for multi-site studies

How is DVBIC different from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other brain injury research programs?

- ♦ Focuses on well-being of those who put themselves in harm's way for our country
- ♦ Conducts the only clinical studies with Active Duty military personnel
- ♦ Focuses on the unique needs of military and veteran beneficiaries including return to duty considerations, continuity of care with military and veterans hospitals and TRICARE

What type of care is available for persons with TBI through DVBIC sites?

Each facility provides brain injury evaluations. Each individual evaluated at a DVBIC site receives a comprehensive assessment that may include any of the following examinations:

- ♦ Neurological
- ♦ Neuropsychological (including comprehensive neuropsychological testing)
- ♦ Laboratory (Blood work)
- ♦ Psychosocial
- ♦ Audiologic (including formal audiometry)
- ♦ Electroencephalographic (EEG)

Additionally, persons admitted to inpatient TBI rehabilitation programs at a VA site receive:

- ♦ Physiatric assessment
- ♦ Occupational Therapy
- ♦ Rehabilitation Nursing
- ♦ Vocational Assessment
- ♦ Other rehabilitative therapies as indicated
- ♦ Physical Therapy
- ♦ Speech Therapy
- ♦ Cognitive Therapy
- ♦ Therapeutic Recreation
- ♦ Psychology

Other evaluations (i.e., neuro-ophthalmology, dental, ear/nose/throat (ENT), vestibular [balance] testing and treatment, psychiatry, etc.) may be obtained if a need for these services is identified. Treatment is based on individual goals in a multi-disciplinary team setting. Persons who require community re-entry rehabilitation in a residential setting can receive it at our civilian partner site, Virginia NeuroCare in Charlottesville, VA.

Is there a specific set of treatments or services DVBIC sites provide?

Traumatic brain injury results in a broad range of physical, cognitive, behavioral, emotional and social challenges. DVBIC sites provide a consistent standard of clinical care and rehabilitation; however, each person has a plan of care that addresses the individual's needs. Persons with TBI have access to ongoing DVBIC clinical research trials.

Where are DVBIC sites located?

DVBIC sites located at:

Military Treatment Facilities (MTF):

- ♦ Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, DC
- ♦ Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland Air Force Base, TX
- ♦ Naval Medical Center San Diego, San Diego, CA

Veterans Affairs (VA) Sites:

- ♦ Hunter McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, VA
- ♦ James A Haley VA Hospital, Tampa, FL
- ♦ Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Minneapolis, MN
- ♦ VA Palo Alto Health Care System, Palo Alto, CA

Civilian Partner Site:

- ♦ Virginia NeuroCare, Charlottesville, VA

Who is eligible for referral to DVBIC?

Persons with TBI who are eligible for TRICARE or VA benefits may be referred to DVBIC.

How can a patient be referred to DVBIC?

Contact a site directly to begin the referral process that includes a review of all related medical documentation or you may contact headquarters at either 1-800-870-9244 or info@dvbic.org. Headquarters will direct your referral to the appropriate staff.

Where can one learn more about brain injury and DVBIC?

Visit www.DVBIC.org for updates on clinical treatment, research, and educational programs/ materials available from DVBIC. Our web site also has numerous links to other brain injury web sites.