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Brain Waves



Headline News

Today - The [University of Alabama at Birmingham Traumatic Brain Injury Model System \(UAB-TBIMS\)](#) offers a new **Brain Waves** eNewsletter to better inform people with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their families. The new eNewsletter offers...

- Full color layout gives flexibility to include pictures and color text.
- Pictures and [highlighted](#) text links that you can click to quickly take you to the featured information
- Published twice per year instead of once per year.
- Read headline news on local and national topics of interest.
- Features on health, and research.
- Get a list of online websites of interest.

This eNewsletter is free. You can read it [online](#), and you can receive notices when new issues are available by [joining the UAB-TBIMS email list](#).

[UAB Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation](#) and the [Alabama Head Injury Foundation \(AHIF\)](#) have teamed up to offer a Neurobehavior Clinic for people with traumatic brain injury and their families. The Neurobehavior Clinic is a program focusing on people with acquired brain disorders who exhibit significant behavioral and/or emotional problems. The clinic is located at the

Linc Point facility operated by United Cerebral Palsy. Drs. Robert Brunner and Thomas Novack provide information regarding medication management and behavioral interventions. Service coordinators with the AHIF, who also attend the clinic, then assist the consumers and family members in implementing the recommendations. The clinic, unique in Alabama, is open once per month.

April 2, 2013 - President Obama unveiled the "BRAIN" Initiative—a bold new research effort to revolutionize our understanding of the human mind and uncover new ways to treat, prevent, and cure brain disorders like Alzheimer's, schizophrenia, autism, epilepsy, and traumatic brain injury.

The [BRAIN Initiative](#) — short for Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies — builds on the President's State of the Union call for historic investments in research and development to fuel the innovation, job creation, and economic growth that together create a thriving middle class.

The Initiative promises to accelerate the invention of new technologies that will help researchers produce real-time pictures of complex neural circuits and visualize the rapid-fire interactions of cells that occur at the speed of thought. Such cutting-edge capabilities, applied to both simple and complex systems, will open new doors to understanding how brain function is linked to human behavior and learning, and the mechanisms of brain disease.

[SOURCE](#)



New from the TBI Model Systems

What do you need to know about living with a Traumatic Brain Injury?

The [Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center](#) is seeking your ideas on topics for traumatic brain injury (TBI) factsheets that people with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their families would like to know. The results from this confidential [online survey](#) are to be used to develop factsheets and other information materials about living with a TBI.

HEALTH MATTERS

Managing Irritability and Temper Following Brain Injury

People who have a frontal head injury are often unable to hold back their emotional and verbal responses. This means anger and irritability can be unpredictable problems.

Temper outbursts often occur in response to some type of minor event. The anger tends to escalate very rapidly and may be directed at a person, such as a family member, or some object, such as slamming a door. After a few minutes of looking intense and perhaps raising his/her voice, the individual usually calms down. On a positive note, the anger rarely escalates into violence such as hitting, throwing things, or breaking things unless the individual had a history of such outbursts prior to brain injury.

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Managing temper outbursts can be challenging for family members and caregivers. They need to know that they cannot control someone else's behavior, but they can control their own behavior when dealing with temper outbursts. And, although they may not be able to prevent all temper outbursts, they can help reduce the number and intensity of outbursts.

Here are 10 important tips for managing temper outbursts of people with brain injury.

1. If possible, it is best to have several caregivers who can take turns being with the individual with brain injury. As a caregiver, your ability to deal with behavior problems is better if you are rested and taking regular breaks.
2. Remain calm when the individual becomes irritable or angry. If you become agitated, it can increase the agitation of the person with head injury.
3. Do not take personally anything the person who is injured says in anger.

4. Never attempt to reason or argue with a person with brain injury who is angry. The person may not be thinking clearly, so it does not make sense to reason with him/her. Wait until the person has calmed and then talk.
5. When you talk, speak clearly and in a normal voice to change the topic of what you are talking about or redirect the person's attention to something else.
6. Tell the person you need a break and leave the person alone for a few minutes by going to another room or outside. Usually temper will decrease after a few minutes when there is no one there. When you return, talk in a calm voice and try to discuss the temper problem. Point out other ways the person could have reacted to the situation.
7. Do not reinforce negative behaviors, such as temper outbursts, by giving the person more attention. It is better to withdraw attention, even to the point of not looking at the person. This is another reason that leaving the person alone is often helpful.
8. Be sure to reinforce good behavior. When the person is calm, give him/her attention and praise. Make these times enjoyable for both of you.
9. Although rare, sometimes a person with head injury is a danger to himself or others when angry. If there is a threat of violence, protect yourself. Leave the person and call the police or take the person to a local emergency room for an evaluation.
10. Never try to calm a person with a head injury by giving him/her any alcohol or medications that have not been prescribed by a doctor. This is dangerous.

Information taken from [*Managing Irritability and Temper following Brain Injury*](#), Rehab Tip Sheet #7, University of Alabama at Birmingham Traumatic Brain Injury Model System. Download is free.

RESEARCH *spotlight*

Weight Management Treatment Program for Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

According to the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), obesity is one of our nation's fastest growing public health concerns. This is because people who are obese are more likely to develop serious health conditions such as cancer, gallbladder disease, heart disease, high blood pressure, high levels of cholesterol and triglycerides, liver disease, osteoarthritis, skin problems (especially poor wound healing), sleep apnea, stroke, and type-2 diabetes.

People who are obese are also more likely to have a poorer quality of life. This is because they tend to avoid activities that they would like to do. They avoid activities for reasons that may include depression, physical discomfort, sexual problems, shame, or social isolation.

People with traumatic brain injury (TBI) are not immune to the health and lifestyle problems associated with obesity. They are at risk for the same problems as everyone else who is overweight or obese.

Plus, obesity often complicates problems related to TBI. For example, obesity can make it more difficult for people with TBI to participate in physical activity and reintegrate into the community.

Obesity can be prevented and treated, and there are many well-tested treatment approaches to reduce obesity in the general population. Yet, there is a lack of evidence-based weight management approaches designed specifically for people with TBI.

The [University of Alabama at Birmingham Traumatic Brain Injury Model System \(UAB-TBIMS\)](#) has recently been funded to tailor a weight management treatment program for persons with traumatic brain injury. The new program will be based on the [UAB EatRight Lifestyle](#) program, which is an evidence-based weight management program for the general population. The [UAB EatRight Lifestyle](#) program provides effective strategies that empower individuals to change their lifestyle, achieve personal health goals, and to manage their weight.

There are four goals for tailoring program.

1. Modify the [UAB EatRight Lifestyle](#) program to treat persons with TBI who are overweight or obese.
2. Evaluate the modified, telehealth-based weight management treatment program as an interactive technology approach for persons with TBI who are overweight or obese.
3. Determine the effect of the telehealth-based weight management treatment program on weight reduction (primary outcome of interest), body composition, lifestyle and health behaviors, amount of physical activity, dietary/food intake, physiological indicators, social support for changes in exercise and diet, and community integration among persons with TBI who are overweight or obese.
4. Identify predictors of reductions in weight.

The ultimate goal of this project is to examine a low-cost, interactive web-based weight management program for people with TBI.

The ultimate goal of this project is to examine a low-cost, interactive web-based weight management program for people with TBI. If successful, this may serve as an important health promotion strategy for persons with TBI in addition to traditional rehabilitation approaches.

The research described is being conducted by the [University of Alabama at Birmingham Traumatic Brain Injury Model System](#) and supported by grant #H133A120096 from the [National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research \(NIDRR\)](#).

TBI ONLINE CONNECTIONS

TBI Exchange Forum

The [UAB Traumatic Brain Injury Model System](#) offers a new information exchange [forum](#) on managing issues associated with traumatic brain injury (TBI). People with TBI and families are invited to share their personal experiences and offer feedback to others in this community. There is **NO FEE** for joining this [forum](#), but you must register through [Google Groups](#) and be approved by an administrator to post. This is necessary to prevent spam postings.

Relationships After Traumatic Brain Injury

The [Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center](#) released the first in a new [Hot Topics](#) series of modules for people facing traumatic brain injury (TBI). This module consists of a suite of resources including videos, factsheets, and a slideshow to provide useful information, including strategies that may be helpful to people with traumatic brain injury and their partners to address issues experienced after TBI.

BrainLine

This is a national multimedia project offering information and resources about preventing, treating, and living with TBI. BrainLine includes a series of webcasts, an electronic newsletter, and an extensive outreach campaign in partnership with national organizations concerned about traumatic brain injury.

Traumatic Brain Injury: The Journey Home

This provides an informative and sensitive exploration of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), including information for patients, family members, and caregivers. Topics include brain injury types and symptoms, TBI treatment and recovery, and helpful insights about the potential long-term effects of brain injury. Animation is used to help patients clearly understand the brain, and the results of injuries to different parts of the brain. Survivors and their caregivers share courageous stories about their own experiences, providing down-to-earth facts along with inspiration and hope.

Independent Living Research Utilization

This program is a national center for information, training, research, and technical assistance in independent living. Its goal is to expand the body of knowledge in independent living and to improve utilization of results of research programs and demonstration projects in this field. It is a program of [The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research](#), a nationally recognized medical rehabilitation facility for persons with disabilities.

The [University of Alabama at Birmingham Traumatic Brain Injury Model System \(UAB-TBIMS\)](#) provides [Brain Waves](#) twice annually as an informational resource for people with traumatic brain injury (TBI). [Brain Waves](#) is available to subscribers via email and to everyone via the UAB-TBIMS website at www.uab.edu/tbi. UAB-TBIMS Program Director: Thomas Novack, PhD. Editor: Phil Klebine, MA

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