Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
TBI in Older Adults

• Older adults ages 75 and older have the highest rates of TBI-related hospitalization and death

• TBIs are often missed or misdiagnosed among older adults

• Falls are the leading cause of TBI among older adults

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury
CDC’s Initiative

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury
Communication Goal

• To raise awareness about methods for preventing, recognizing, and responding to fall-related TBIs among older adults ages 75 and older

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer:
Prevent Brain Injury
Target Audience for the Initiative

- Children of adults 75 and older
  - Baby Boomers
  - Some college
  - Get health information online and from friends, relatives, physicians, other caregivers

- Other caregivers: relatives, friends, and professional caregivers

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury
About the Target Audience

• Many children of adults 75 and older:
  – Are concerned about their parents falling
  – Believe falls are inevitable
  – Don’t think about TBI as a fall-related injury
  – Are happy to learn about preventive measures they can take
  – Share health information with parents

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury
Strategies

• Collaborate with fall prevention organizations to integrate fall prevention and TBI messages

• Establish partnerships with key organizations that focus on TBI and fall prevention and/or those that can help get the message out to the target audience

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury
Communication Products

• Tri-fold brochure, fact sheet, posters, magnet for caregivers
• Booklet for older adults
• Newsletter article
• Promotional flyer
• Social networking profile
• E-cards

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer:
Prevent Brain Injury
Materials

• Provide the signs and symptoms of TBI

• List immediate steps to take if an older adult falls

• List ways to help prevent falls:
  – Encourage exercise
  – Make home and surroundings safe
  – Have medicines reviewed
  – Have vision checked

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury
Preventing Traumatic Brain Injury in Older Adults
Information for Family Members and Other Caregivers

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Fact Sheet

Preventing Traumatic Brain Injury in Older Adults
A Fact Sheet for Family Members and Other Caregivers

If you are one of the millions of people in this country who provides care for an older adult—a parent, grandparent, other family member, or even a close friend, you should learn about traumatic brain injury or TBI. A TBI is caused by a bump or blow to the head that affects how the brain normally works. TBI is a special health concern for older adults. People ages 75 and older have the highest rates of TBI-related hospitalizations and death. They also recover more slowly and die more often from these injuries than do younger people. Falls are the leading cause of TBI.

What are the signs and symptoms of TBI?

- Low-grade headache that won't go away
- Having more trouble than usual remembering things, paying attention or concentrating, organizing daily tasks, or making decisions and solving problems
- Slowness in thinking, speaking, acting, or reading
- Getting lost or easily confused
- Neck pain
- Feeling tired all of the time, lack of energy
- Change in sleep pattern—sleeping much longer than before, having trouble sleeping
- Loss of balance, feeling light-headed, or dizzy
- Increased sensitivity to sounds, lights, distractions
- Blurred vision or eyes that tire easily
- Loss of sense of taste or smell
- Ringing in the ears
- Change in sexual drive
- Mood changes like feeling sad, anxious, or listless, or becoming easily irritated or angry for little or no reason, or lack of motivation

A person with moderate or severe TBI may show the symptoms listed on the left, but may also have:

- A headache that gets worse or does not go away
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Convulsions or seizures
- Inability to wake up from sleep
- Dilation of one or both pupils
- Slurred speech
- Weakness or numbness in the arms or legs
- Loss of coordination
- Increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation

What should you do if you think your loved one has a TBI?
Take your loved one to the doctor. Tell the doctor about any prescription drugs, including over-the-counter medicines, blood thinners, or aspirin that the patient takes.
Participating Organizations

• Administration on Aging
• American Occupational Therapy Association
• Brain Injury Association of America
• Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
• Children of Aging Parents
• Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center
• Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care
• Easter Seals
• Employee Assistance Professionals Association, Inc.

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury
Participating Organizations

- Emergency Nurses Association
- Family Caregiver Alliance/National Center on Caregiving
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- Home Safety Council
- National Adult Day Services Association
- International Parish Nurse Resource Center
- National Alliance for Caregiving
- National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
- National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer:
Prevent Brain Injury
Participating Organizations

- National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
- National Council on Aging
- National Family Caregivers Association
- National Institute on Aging
- National Safety Council
- State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association
- Visiting Nurses Association of America
- YMCA of the USA

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury
Roles for Organizations

• Urge affiliates/constituents to:
  – Promote messages and materials
  – Distribute materials
  – Host an event to support during relevant health observances
  – Work with local media to get coverage of fall-related TBI events and activities
Roles for Organizations (cont’d)

• Promote messages and materials
  – Email
  – Listservs
  – Websites
  – Newsletters/Magazines
  – Conferences/Presentations/Workshops

• Link to CDC webpage

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer:
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Resources for Organizations

- **Media Access Guide**
  - Media relations tips
  - Talking points
  - Sample media tools
  - Preparing spokespersons
  - Media monitoring coverage tips

- **Event Planning Guide**
  - Planning tips and tools
  - Selecting partners
  - Promoting
  - Hosting
  - Evaluating
  - Fall-related TBI event ideas

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury
National Launch

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury
National Launch

• Coordinated Injury Center launch of fall prevention materials

• State and local events

• Future activities…
To learn more, visit:
www.cdc.gov/BrainInjuryInSeniors