

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE CARE OF RETURNING MILITARY PERSONNEL

In the Clinic
Annals of Internal Medicine

What are common health problems affecting returning military personnel?

- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), an anxiety disorder that can occur after a traumatic event involving threat of injury or death.
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI) from an explosion or other injury that disrupts the function of the brain.
- Chronic pain.
- Substance abuse.
- Sadness, distress, and depression.
- Difficulty managing stress.



What are the effects of PTSD?

- Flashback episodes, nightmares, and strong reactions to situations reminiscent of the event.
- Feeling emotionally numb, detached, or hopeless.
- Difficulty concentrating, startling easily.
- Irritability, anger.
- Sleep problems.
- Treatment is available to reduce anxiety and other symptoms of PTSD.
- Significant changes in mental functioning and personality if symptoms persist (postconcussion syndrome).
- Symptoms may not appear for weeks to months after the injury.
- Severity may range from mild (brief change in mental status or consciousness) to severe (extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury).

What are the effects of TBI?

- Concussion, headache, confusion, dizziness, blurred vision.
- Fatigue or lethargy, changes in sleep patterns.
- Behavioral or mood changes.
- Memory, concentration, or attention problems.

What other common issues affect the well-being of returning military personnel?

- Ability to access needed care.
- Readjustment to family life.
- Job and financial worries.

For More Information

www.dvbic.org
www.dvbic.org/tbi-basics
Resources on traumatic brain injury, including a basics facts handout, from the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center.

www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml
Information about posttraumatic stress disorder from the National Institute of Mental Health.

<http://dcoe.health.mil/>
Information on coping with life after deployment from the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury.

www.rand.org/multi/military/veterans/resources.html
Psychological health and TBI resources for military members and families from the RAND Corporation.

ACP[®]
AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
INTERNAL MEDICINE | *Doctors for Adults*