

Atrium Health Navicent Offers Tips for Preventing Traumatic Brain Injuries

At least 2.8 million Americans sustain traumatic brain injuries each year

MACON, Ga., March 15, 2023 – March is Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month, and health professionals at Atrium Health Navicent Rehabilitation Hospital want the community to become aware of tips for prevention, and to know that if an injury does occur, treatment options are available close to home.

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) occurs when an external force or impact injures the brain and causes an alteration in brain function.

At least 2.8 million Americans sustain TBIs each year, and brain injury is a leading cause of death and disability in the U.S. The majority of TBIs are caused by falls, being struck by an object and motor vehicle accidents. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were about 223,135 TBI-related hospitalizations in 2019 and 64,362 TBI-related deaths in 2020. People age 75 years and older had the highest numbers of TBI-related hospitalizations and deaths.

By implementing safety tips like these, some injuries can be prevented:

- Wear a seat belt every time you are in a motor vehicle.
- Never drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Wear a helmet, or appropriate protective gear, when you or your children ride a bike, motorcycle, scooter, or horse, or even when skating.
- Wear a helmet and protective pads when playing a contact sport such as football, boxing or soccer, or while playing sports such as baseball and softball.
- Older adults should talk to their doctor to evaluate their personal fall risk and about possible referral to a therapist for balance and strength training.
- Have your eyes checked at least once a year, and be sure to update your eyeglasses if needed.
- Make living areas safer for children by installing window guards and using safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Make sure your child's playground has soft material under it, such as hardwood mulch or sand.

For people who have experienced a fall, been in an accident or who have been bumped in the head while playing sports, it's important to seek medical attention right away.

"Brain injuries sometimes are overlooked, especially with sports. If you hit your head, always seek medical help. If an older adult falls and hits their head, even if there are no symptoms, it could lead to subdural bleeding, which only later will cause noticeable deficits in function. Getting immediate treatment is the first step to recovery," said Elizabeth Eidson, a physical therapist at Atrium Health Navicent Rehabilitation Hospital.

A facility offering both inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services, Atrium Health Navicent Rehabilitation Hospital offers help for individuals who have experienced a traumatic brain injury stemming from a fall, car accident or blunt force trauma to the head. The team of doctors, speech therapists, occupational therapists and physical therapists evaluate each patient and tailor a rehabilitation program specifically to them.

To learn more about the services offered at Atrium Health Navicent Rehabilitation Hospital, visit navicenthealth.org/service-center/rehabilitation-hospital.

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of [Advocate Health](#), which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the fifth-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated,

nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.

###