**What is a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)?**
A Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is an injury caused by a blow or jolt to the head that disrupts brain functions. **Not every blow or jolt causes a brain injury.** The majority of head injuries are mild. A *mild* TBI is the same as a concussion.

**Why screen for TBI/concussion?**
All Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are screened to detect health problems. A positive screen means you may have problems that need further evaluation. The TBI screen identifies Veterans who have had a blow or jolt to the head and may need treatment.

**What happens if I screen positive for TBI/concussion?**
If you screen positive for TBI/concussion, it does NOT mean that you have a brain injury. A positive screen means that you are currently having symptoms that could be related to:
- a *mild* TBI/concussion,
- serving in a war zone,
- another treatable condition, such as pain, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or depression, or
- a combination of different causes.

If you screen positive for TBI, you will be scheduled for an evaluation by a TBI specialist (usually in a polytrauma clinic).

**What will happen during my evaluation by the TBI specialist?**
The goal of the follow-up evaluation with the TBI specialist is to decide if you had a TBI and what is causing your current symptoms. Follow-up can be for the symptoms related to the TBI, for another problem resulting in the current symptoms, or both.

The appointment with the TBI specialist involves:
- a review of your combat experiences that might have led to a TBI,
- a review of your current symptoms,
- a physical exam, usually by a physiatrist or neurologist,
- a plan for follow-up care (if necessary).
What else should I know about mild TBI/concussion?

It is common to experience some symptoms immediately after a brain injury. **Most mild TBI/concussions will heal over the first few days or weeks.** For some people, symptoms can be longer lasting. Common symptoms can include:

- sleep problems
- memory problems
- ringing in the ears
- headaches
- irritability, poor concentration
- dizziness/balance problems
- blurred vision
- sensitivity to bright light

Some of your symptoms may have nothing to do with mild TBI/concussion. They could be symptoms you might have even if you never had a brain injury. For example, many people who have never had a brain injury sometimes forget phone numbers and peoples’ names. Others might forget where they parked their car. These are common problems and do not necessarily mean you have had brain injury. Similarly, ringing in the ears could be caused by noise damage.

What can I do to help myself recover?

- Get plenty of sleep every day — at least 7-8 hours. Lack of sleep can make headaches, memory, and concentration problems worse.
- Take medications prescribed by your doctor.
- Limit your use of alcohol. Drinking can make other symptoms worse.
- Limit your use of caffeine and energy drinks.
- Follow through on your medical appointments.

What if my symptoms are due to something else besides mild TBI/concussion?

If you are having symptoms long after your head injury, there is a chance they may be due to something other than a brain injury. **Some of the symptoms may be due to another physical injury, stress, pain, lack of sleep, or a mental health problem, or a combination of these.** The good news is that there are good treatments for the symptoms you are having. Talk with your doctor about what treatment is right for you.

Where can I go for more information?

For more information, call: or visit: www.afterdeployment.org/media/elibrary/mtbi/index.html