

# Frazier Rehabilitation Institute

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## Activity Precautions Following a Brain Injury

*Having a brain injury raises the risk for potential complications – including increased risk of a subsequent brain injury. In order to maximize recovery, the following precautions are strongly encouraged. Please note that this is a general list of recommendations for a person with a brain injury. Consult with your physician for specific questions/concerns.*

**The following precautions are strongly recommended for all persons who have sustained a brain injury:**

- Always wear a seat belt. Children should be placed in a child safety seat.
- Adults and adolescents who plan to drive must complete the driver's evaluation and possibly the driver's course for individuals who have sustained a brain injury.
- Always wear a helmet when biking, roller-skating, roller blading or skate boarding.
- Avoid use of tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drugs.
- Use equipment to reduce risk of falls (as recommended by your therapy team). This may include use of rails, grab bars, non-slip mats, rubber-soled shoes/sticky socks, or taking steps to improve lighting/reduce trip hazards.
- Utilize modified diet/swallowing compensations as directed by your Speech Therapist (if applicable) to reduce risk of pneumonia.
- Be aware that your brain may be more sensitive to overstimulation (such as being in a large crowd of people/noisy environment) and require a quiet and calm space for breaks.
- Be alert for signs of emotional changes, such as depression, anxiety, and anger management problems, which are more common after a brain injury. Consult with your physician if you are experiencing ongoing emotional problems.
  - In case of a mental health emergency, 24/7 assistance is available:  
**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 800-273-TALK (8255)

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**The following precautions are recommended during the first two years for everyone who has sustained a brain injury, with exceptions to be approved by your physician:**

- Do not drive or ride mopeds, 4-wheelers, motorcycles, jet skis, or any other open vehicle.
- No diving into water.
- No water/snow skiing or “tubing.”
- No contact sports including football, basketball, soccer, volleyball, wrestling, hockey, boxing, horseback riding, etc.
- No hunting, firing range, guns, heavy machinery, or power tools.
- No amusement park rides.

**Some medications (even ones available over-the-counter) can be harmful for those with a brain injury. Speak with your rehab physician before taking the following medications:**

- Medications with alcohol content (such as some cough medicine and laxatives)
- Medications with pseudoephedrine listed as an ingredient
- Medications with codeine
- Medications that may cause a sedative-type effect
- Antidepressant medications (unless prescribed by your rehab doctor)
- Allergy medications
  - If you or your primary care physician have any questions about medication issues, please contact your rehab doctor. ***Remember: never stop taking any medications that were prescribed by your rehab doctor – contact your doctor first!***