



**Brain Injury
Alliance**
NEW JERSEY



Wellness After Brain Injury

What is wellness?

Wellness refers to engaging in activities and habits that help contribute to a healthy quality of life. Wellness has many components including:

- Physical health
- Mental/behavioral health
- Maintaining strong social bonds with friends, family, and/or community

What are some challenges for maintaining wellness after brain injury?

- Physical barriers including pain and movement
- Remembering to do activities that improve wellness and health
- Mood changes or low motivation
- Communication
- Limitations with transport, finances, and community/family support

What are some steps to take to improve wellness?

Keep a notebook with important health information such as:

- Medical history/surgical history
- Current medication names, doses, times you take them, and why you are taking them. This includes any vitamins and supplements
- Allergies to any drugs/medications
- Your current doctors and their information

Stay Active:

- Go for walks and try fun new activities
- Aim for 150 minutes of exercise a week
- Wear helmets when appropriate

Be Attentive to Nutrition:

- Aim to eat whole grains, colorful vegetables and fruits, fish, and lean meats
- About half of your daily intake should be fruits and vegetables
- Drink lots of water
- Be cautious about the type and amount of vitamins and supplements you are taking. They can be costly and have limited benefit; be sure to discuss with your doctor

Helpful Tips

Substance use is likely to harm brain function, including:

- Illegal drug use such as cocaine, methamphetamines, or heroin
- Recreational drugs such as marijuana
- Misuse of prescribed opioids or benzodiazepines
- Alcohol can harm and slow recovery after brain injury; there is no known safe amount to consume

Aim to get the recommended 7-8 hours of sleep a night for adults by:

- Avoiding caffeine in the afternoon and evenings
- Avoiding large meals at night
- Staying consistent with the time you go to sleep and the time you wake up in the morning, even on weekends
- If napping during the daytime, keep it to less than 20 minutes
- Trying to stay away from electronics at least 1 hour before bedtime
- Having a separate space for work and recreation to keep the bedroom for sleeping and intimacy
- If you are not sleepy after trying to fall asleep for 20 minutes, get out of bed and return when you feel sleepy

Write down how you are feeling physically and mentally in a journal:

- This can help you be more aware of your thoughts and find patterns throughout the day

Take enough time for yourself and do what makes you feel good:

- Listening to music
- Reading a book
- Sitting quietly, meditation, yoga
- Keep in touch with friends and family

Set alarms and reminders if you have trouble remembering to take your medications and keep appointments



Don't be afraid to ask for help. We all need a little help now and then.

What resources are available for help and support?

The Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey has many options to keep you connected with others and support your wellbeing such as:

Direct Support Services

- CARES resource referral and care management program
- Support groups offered virtually and in person
- Social activities and groups
- Peer Mentor Program
- Information and Referral Helpline
- Camp TREK- a week-long residential camp program for brain injury survivors ages 18 and older

Education

- Workshops and trainings on a variety of brain injury related topics
- Live webinars and recordings that can be accessed at a later date
- Materials and resources on brain injury education and prevention
- Research blog

For more information, visit bianj.org or call the BIANJ Helpline, 1-800-669-4323

This fact sheet was written by Dr. Jessie Chan, Dr. Ally Ferber, and Dr. Brian Greenwald in collaboration with the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey



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