

Blind Side Basics

It's 3rd down and 3 yards to go for a 1st down. In the huddle, the quarterback points at you and says "it's your ball." You line up behind the quarterback and prepare for the handoff. The ball is hiked, you receive the handoff and sprint forward towards the first down marker. Suddenly, a linebacker meets you head on. The next thing you remember, you're waking up in an ambulance with a medic asking you if you can hear him.

Unfortunately, these instances are all too common in athletics, especially youth and scholastic sports. Besides being a parent's worst nightmare, it can also be detrimental to a youth's education and future health. So how can you prevent injuries like this from happening? You probably can't eliminate the possibility, but you can dramatically reduce the likelihood by following these few guidelines:

1. Never participate in a contact sport with which you are not familiar. The safety risk of a "sandlot football" game can increase exponentially if you've never been instructed on how to safely play. The

same goes for lifting weights and other physically demanding sports and exercise activities.

2. Check the credentials of the coaches that will be instructing you or your children in the chosen sport. Many times, these coaches are simply volunteers who have had little to no coaching or playing experience in the sport. While this is a great gesture, lack of experience can mean ill informed decisions by the leader which can potentially increase the chance of injury to you or your children.

3. Stay and watch your children and their coaches practice or train. Another good way to safeguard against unsafe instruction is to observe how the practices and training sessions are



conducted. That way, you have a first hand knowledge of the degree of safety being used.

4. Take personal responsibility to know your own physical limits and capacity for recovery. Boot camp drill instructor style training instruction has its value when you need a push or to be motivated, but do not let yourself

or your children be bullied or guilted into pushing past your or their limits for physical exertion. If not fully recovered from a previous training session or practice, it makes no sense to training at 100% effort again until you or your children are recovered.

5. Ensure the participant has the proper safety equipment and it's fully functional. This should go unsaid, but many times a school or recreational sports league reuses sports safety equipment (such as a helmet or shoulder pads) from one season to the next and can deteriorate over time. Take the time to inspect and test the safety equipment to ensure it fits and properly functions. If it does not, DEMAND that it be replaced with a serviceable piece.

6. Ask yourself if you (or your children) are really suited for a particular exercise or sport. Finally, use common sense while deciding on and competing in your chosen activity. If you feel it can be detrimental to your health or livelihood, simply don't participate. Some adults who have pre-existing joint or spine injuries may want to steer

away from some sports. A great majority of the local athletes compete merely for the enjoyment of competition, so don't potentially risk your future health over a recreational sport.

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People who are injured in an accident can suffer many different kinds of injuries. Among the most serious, as well as the hardest to diagnose and treat, are so-called traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), sometimes also known as “closed-head trauma.”

TBIs send more than 400,000 people to the hospital for treatment each year, three-quarters of whom are males between the ages of 15 and 34. This group is over-represented because of the lifestyle that many of the accident victims lead: riding motorcycles without a helmet, participating in dangerous sports, drinking too much, and getting into car accidents. Although the majority of these injuries are moderate to mild, even a minor TBI can cause the victim to suffer serious problems.

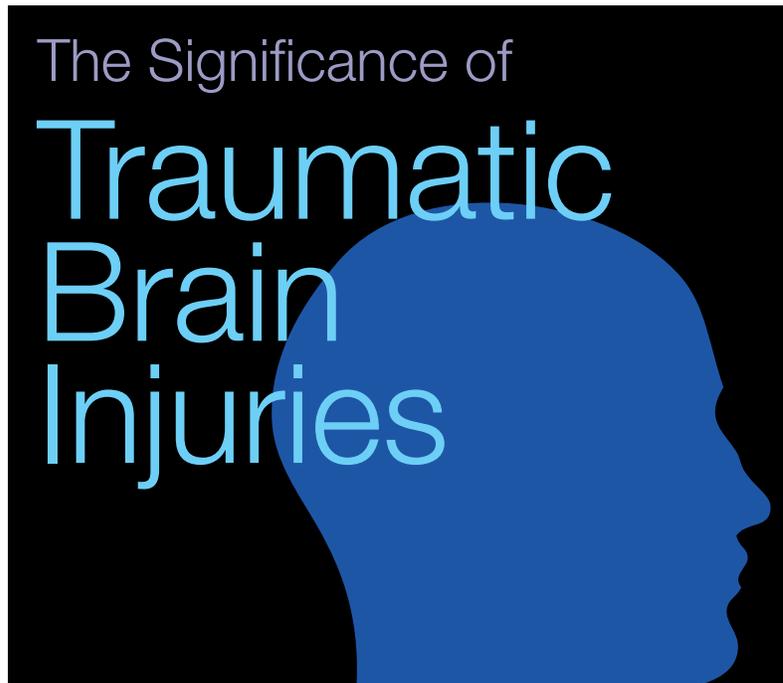
Difficulty Treating TBIs

The problem with treating TBIs is that many doctors are not adequately trained in the neuroscience of head injuries and are unable to properly diagnose the injury when they encounter one. Although most doctors are capable of recognizing serious TBIs (such as those that put a victim in a coma), the less debilitating TBIs are more difficult to diagnose because there are often few outward signs of the internal injury. This misunderstanding of the symptoms of moderate TBIs has a number of serious negative consequences, both medical and legal.

Many people who suffer such TBIs do not receive the appropriate

treatment. The long-term effects of a TBI can include many and varied symptoms, often related to brain function, such as seizures, headaches, dizziness, and problems with memory and concentration. However, TBIs can

directly related to the TBI. Because doctors can be slow to diagnose the connection, proving that a TBI has caused the symptoms that a person describes to the jury in court can be difficult.



Compounding the problem of the doctor’s slow diagnosis, many of the people who serve on juries have trouble believing that a head injury can cause so many different problems, not all of which are related to the victim’s brain function. All of these factors make it more difficult for a TBI victim to win a full recovery of damages for the injury.

Lessons Learned

cause other symptoms not commonly associated with the brain, including loss of motor control, fatigue, depression, speech disorders, anxiety, sexual dysfunction, and a short temper, as well as an increased chance of getting lost or becoming agitated.

Given the variety of symptoms and the difficulty some doctors have connecting them to the TBI, treatment is often delayed or not provided at all, and the patient continues to suffer, often unaware of the cause of his problems. Even when a TBI victim has been correctly diagnosed, the variety of symptoms can make treatment expensive and difficult.

Legal Obstacles

Legally, it is often difficult to prove that symptoms suffered by a TBI victim are

Several lessons can be drawn from this. If you have suffered a TBI, even a minor one, and are suffering from symptoms that you never experienced before being injured, stay on top of your health-care providers. While not all symptoms that a person may suffer from are necessarily caused by a TBI, the range of symptoms is great and it may take some time to get a correct diagnosis.

If you are involved in a lawsuit where you or a loved one suffered a TBI, be sure to retain qualified counsel to help you prepare and present what can be a difficult and complex case. This way you can help ensure that you are fully compensated for all of the injuries that you or yours have suffered.

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If you are stopped, know your rights.



When police conduct a traffic stop on an individual, the law requires that the stopping Officer developed a reasonable suspicion or probable cause before the traffic stop is made.

When you hire a criminal defense attorney, they will make sure your rights were not violated when the police conduct such a stop of your vehicle. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause can arise from a multitude of factors. Examples can be: speeding, running a stop sign, equipment malfunction, failing to signal, weaving, etc...

When a traffic stop is made without reasonable suspicion or probable cause, defense attorneys can file a motion to suppress alleging that law enforcement detained their client in violation of the 4th Amendment of the Constitution. If the Court grants the motion to suppress, then all evidence obtained after the traffic stop will be thrown out of court and unavailable for the prosecution to use against the Defendant. Such evidence can be: the Defendant's identity, drugs, firearms, incriminating statements, observations by law enforcement, performance of Field Sobriety Exercises, breath tests, etc... Often, without this crucial evidence there is nothing left for the State to rely on to prove the charges against the accused therefore forcing the prosecution to drop the entire case.

For example, just because someone:

1. fails to use a turn signal when switching lanes,
2. weaves within or outside their lane of travel,
3. makes a wide turn,
4. has a nonfunctional brake light,
5. has a cracked windshield,
6. is parked behind a closed business,
7. drives a vehicle that is registered to someone who has a suspended license,
8. drives a vehicle with a cracked tail light,
9. squeals their tires,
10. stops their vehicle in the roadway,
11. improperly backs their vehicle in the roadway,
12. has an item in the rear windshield obstructing the driver's view,
13. has an item hanging from the rearview mirror,...

...does NOT always give law enforcement the legal right to conduct a traffic stop!

The Motions to Suppress described above are only one of the many ways the attorneys at Roman & Roman can help to Fight Your Charges!

The Significance of Traumatic Brain Injuries

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After The Injury

Victims of brain injuries will receive care from a wide range of professionals. Realizing the diversity of these providers is essential to understanding the gravity and magnitude of TBIs. The range of professionals who may have to be consulted illustrates the breadth of disability that a survivor must endure.

Perhaps the most important of these professionals is the neurologist. This doctor specializes in the medical treatment of the nervous system: the brain, spinal cord, nerves, and muscles. A neurologist makes an initial evaluation, diagnoses the injury, and consults on immediate medical care for the patient to follow.

Treats for Troops

Roman & Roman is partnering up this holiday season with a local charity called Treats for Troops. The organization, based out of Land O'Lakes, collects one gallon sized zip-lock bags full of toiletries and snacks and ships them to the troops and sailors serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Roman & Roman will be collecting supplies in its Clearwater and Hudson offices to donate to Treats for Troops. If you want to help with this most noble of causes, please drop off your items for donation to us at either 2274 State Road 580, Clearwater, FL 33763, or 12000 US Highway 19, Hudson FL 34667. In order for the items to reach the troops before the holidays, we need all donations by Friday, October 29.

For more information, visit TreatsforTroops.info.

Behind The Scenes

Stephenie A. Fenton is a lifelong resident of Florida, and was raised in Marathon in the Florida Keys. Stephenie grew up in paradise and enjoyed water sports and boating. After graduating from Marathon High School in 1991, she attended the University of Florida majoring in Psychology.

Stephenie graduated with honors from the University of Florida in 1995, and went on to earn her Juris Doctor degree, cum laude, from Stetson University College of Law in 1998. Stephenie started her law career with Roman & Roman, P.A., first as a law clerk while she was a law student at Stetson, and then, upon graduation and being admitted into The Florida Bar, she remained with Roman & Roman, P.A., as an attorney.

Stephenie initially practiced with the

firm in the fields of family, business and real estate law, but for the last several years has practiced personal injury law. Stephenie is licensed to practice law in all state and federal courts in Middle District of Florida. She is a member of The Florida Bar Association, The Clearwater Bar Association, the Rotary Club of Dunedin and Working Women of Tampa Bay. Stephenie just completed a two year term as a Board Member and Program Chair with the Rotary Club of Dunedin. When she is not working, Stephenie spends her leisure time traveling. She has traveled to Mexico, the Bahamas,

France, Italy, Spain, Morocco, Switzerland, Jamaica and throughout the United States. One of her favorite places to visit is the mountains of North Carolina where she enjoys hiking. She also loves going back to her hometown of Marathon and tries to visit at least once a year. Stephenie also enjoys reading, running, weight training and photography.

