

## **Parkwood Hospital**

### **Driver Assessment and Rehabilitation Program**

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## **DRIVING AFTER A TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY**

Traumatic Brain Injury and Closed Head Injury commonly occur due to motor vehicle collisions. Injuries can range from a loss of consciousness of less than five minutes to being comatose for many months. Any level of injury can cause an increase in pre-injury bad driving behaviors or create new, unsafe driving issues. These issues can stem from problems with vision, accuracy and speed of eye movements, speed of response, attention, memory, problem solving, judgment and/or loss of physical skills. It can spare one skill and wipe another skill completely from memory. It commonly makes learning new information difficult and may keep a survivor from quickly learning from their mistakes. All of the above can result in unsafe driving encounters, unpredictable driving actions or repeat collisions for the survivor.

**If someone you know has been in an accident or has had a TBI, look for the following warning signs:**

- Inappropriate driving speeds
- Is slow to identify and avoid potentially hazardous situations
- Needs help or instruction from passengers
- Doesn't observe signs or signals or speed limits
- Leaves out important road, traffic or warning information
- Slow or poor decisions to traffic or road changes
- Easily frustrated or confused
- Pattern of getting lost, even in familiar areas
- Collisions or near misses
- Blames their driving mistakes on the behavior of other drivers

If you or those that drive with you notice any of the above warning signs, you may need a driving evaluation. A driver rehabilitation specialist, with knowledge about the medical conditions, can provide a comprehensive evaluation and determine your ability to drive.

**This assessment should include:**

Vision Perception

Functional Ability

Reaction Time

Behind-the-wheel evaluation