

## Helpful Equipment for Traumatic Brain Injury Patients

by *Traumatic Brain Injury Attorneys on 01/07/11*

Once **traumatic brain injury** patients have been discharged from general hospitals and rehabilitation treatment centers, they can usually move back home. Family and friends can help ease this transition by making sure all doctor-recommended equipment and supplies have been ordered and delivered before the patient arrives home..

Although **traumatic brain injuries** (TBIs) can inflict different types and levels of temporary and permanent damages, most patients will need one or more of the following items while trying to adjust to their changed lives.

- **Wheelchairs.** Patients need to ask their doctors whether they'll need manual or electric wheelchairs. If they have plenty of strength in their arms, manual ones may be sufficient. However, if the person may need a wheelchair for a lengthy period of time, it may be best to try and obtain an electric one. All new patients must be properly measured and "fitted" into their wheelchairs so they can avoid unnecessary "wear and tear" on their bodies while maneuvering their chairs. Also, by obtaining a doctor's order for a wheelchair, a patient may have better chances of getting Medicare, Medicaid or a private insurer to cover the cost.
- **Walkers.** Once a doctor believes a patient has regained sufficient balance, he or she may recommend the use of a walker. Since there are many different types of walkers, be sure your healthcare provider recommends the one best suited to your current mobility and physical constraints.
- **Hospital beds.** If a doctor expects a TBI patient to be bedridden for an extended period of time (and knows the individual can't maneuver in and out of a regular bed), it

may be necessary to order a special one. Be sure to ask the doctor if full rails are necessary and make sure the mattress fits snugly into the frame.

- **Ramps and other residential needs.** If you own your own home, you may be able to readily build a few wheelchair ramps outside your home and between important rooms. You may also want to widen a few doorways, including those to the kitchen and bathroom, to accommodate your wheelchair. If you do not own your home, try negotiating with your landlord to see if you can obtain specific safety accommodations. Otherwise, you may need to ask your family and friends to move you to a newer facility that can meet all of your disability needs.
- **Bathroom safety equipment.** Give serious thought to installing safety rails on your toilet and bathtub area. If your injuries are quite severe or permanent and you can afford it, you may want to completely remodel your bathroom and put in a small shower area with a door that can be easily opened and shut. Special shower chairs and water spray devices are also available. They can greatly help patients meet their own personal hygiene needs.
- **Ceiling Lifts and Standing Frames.** If you're a TBI patient and cannot easily get out of your bed, you may need to install a standing frame to help support you as you get out of bed each day. Likewise, ceiling lifts – which usually run on a set of tracks installed into the ceiling – can help you move from your wheelchair to the bed and into (or out of) your bathroom facilities. These devices also help caregivers avoid hurting their backs while trying to lift patients.
- **Equipment for monitoring vital signs.** If your doctor believes you need a temporary or permanent nurse to monitor your vital signs, you may need to rent this type of equipment.

Should you already be a **TBI patient** at home with unmet needs, be sure to ask your doctor what other equipment or supplies may be available to help you. As your condition changes over time, don't hesitate to ask your doctor if there's any new equipment that may meet even more of your needs.

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