

# Understanding the injury and its implications

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Non-traumatic brain injury: Support a return to learning and activity' from the Guide:

[Acquired brain injury and learning](#)

---

## **Includes:**

What is a non-traumatic brain injury?

Get to know the whānau story

The experience of the child or young person

Siblings' experiences

Be aware of new challenges for whānau

Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Supporting learners with acquired brain injury](#)

Strategy: [Non-traumatic brain injury: Support a return to learning and activity](#)

Suggestion: [Understanding the injury and its implications](#)

Date

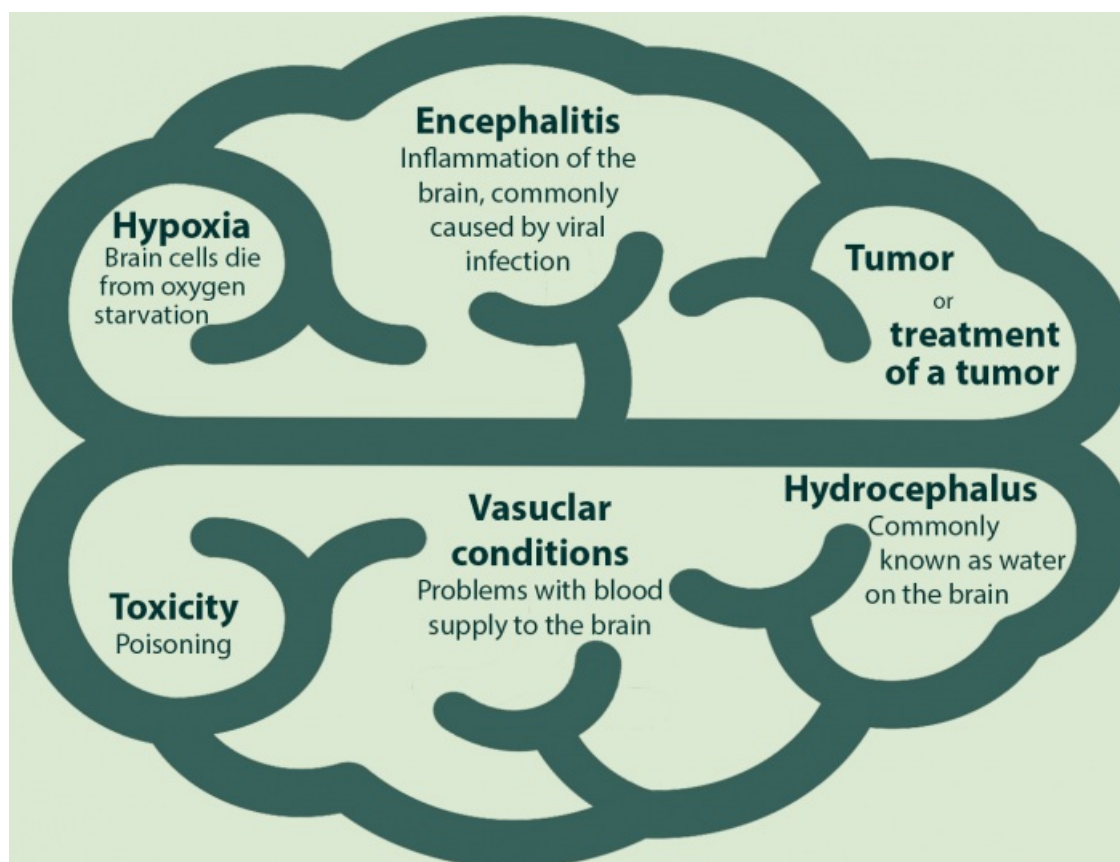
30 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2)

---

## What is a non-traumatic brain injury?



[View full image \(245 KB\)](#)

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Supporting learners with acquired brain injury](#)

Strategy: [Non-traumatic brain injury: Support a return to learning and activity](#)

Suggestion: [Understanding the injury and its implications](#)

Date

30 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2)

---

## Get to know the whānau story

To be effective collaborators, educators need to understand that a brain injury doesn't only affect the individual, the whole family is affected.



Video hosted on Youtube [http://youtu.be/rMrUMno8r\\_k](http://youtu.be/rMrUMno8r_k)

Closed Captions

Source:

[Attitude \(NZ\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/user/AttitudeTV/>

[Inclusive Education](#)

From

Guide: [Supporting learners with acquired brain injury](#)

Strategy: [Non-traumatic brain injury: Support a return to learning and activity](#)

Suggestion: [Understanding the injury and its implications](#)

Date

30 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2)

---

## The experience of the child or young person

The effects of a non-traumatic brain injury will vary from person to person and can result in any or all of these outcomes.

- ✓ Changes in thinking, behaviour and personality, physical abilities, and sensory perceptions
- ✓ Feelings of fear, anxiety, loss or confusion, and frustration
- ✓ Difficulty communicating needs or thoughts and ideas
- ✓ Extreme tiredness.

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Supporting learners with acquired brain injury](#)

Strategy: [Non-traumatic brain injury: Support a return to learning and activity](#)

Suggestion: [Understanding the injury and its implications](#)

Date

30 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2)

---

## Siblings' experiences

Siblings or whānau members may experience:

- ✓ feelings of unfairness – it might be difficult for them to understand why their brother or sister is being treated differently to them
- ✓ worry, anxiety, and sadness about their parents or their brother or sister
- ✓ feelings of wanting to protect their sibling
- ✓ confusion and misunderstanding about the brain injury
- ✓ difficulty understanding changes in their sibling's personality or behaviour
- ✓ embarrassment about the injured child's behaviour and may be wary about having friends at the house
- ✓ feelings that they're not being told about what's going on, or being "kept out of the loop"
- ✓ feeling left out or forgotten
- ✓ feeling guilty about what's happened (sometimes called "survivor guilt")
- ✓ feeling guilty about expressing their own feelings because they don't want to add to the burden on their parents
- ✓ a sense of loss that their sibling seems different.

## Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Supporting learners with acquired brain injury](#)

Strategy: [Non-traumatic brain injury: Support a return to learning and activity](#)

Suggestion: [Understanding the injury and its implications](#)

Date

30 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2)

---

# Be aware of new challenges for whānau

Families may face many of these unexpected situations and challenges.

- ✓ The shock of the initial brain injury may involve coping with intensive care treatment.
- ✓ The cognitive, behavioural, and emotional effects of a brain injury can be more limiting and harder to accept and overcome than the physical injuries, both for the person who has sustained the injury and for their family and friends.
- ✓ Unplanned for financial and legal costs have to be managed.
- ✓ They may experience isolation.
- ✓ They may have to deal with multiple agencies, including ACC, hospitals, and WINZ.
- ✓ They have to adjust to the changes in the person with brain injury and how these affect other family members and friends.
- ✓ They may experience stress related to caring for the injured person.

[Inclusive Education](#)

From

Guide: [Supporting learners with acquired brain injury](#)

Strategy: [Non-traumatic brain injury: Support a return to learning and activity](#)

Suggestion: [Understanding the injury and its implications](#)

Date

30 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2)

---

## Useful resources

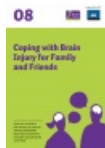


### Non-traumatic brain injury

This webpage provides information about the causes of non-traumatic brain injury.

Publisher: The Children's Trust for Children with Brain Injury

[Visit website](#)



### Coping with brain injury for friends and family

Read time: 4 min

This resource suggests strategies for helping in the recovery of a person with a brain injury and looking after yourself at the same time.

[Download PDF](#)

This information was downloaded/printed from the Ministry of Education's website "Inclusive Education". Except where otherwise noted it is Crown Copyright 2018.

Information on the Inclusive Education website is regularly updated so we recommend you check the website version of this information to ensure it remains current.