

Having a Brother or Sister with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

The Child Brain Injury Trust supports children and families affected by childhood acquired brain injury. This factsheet is for brothers and sisters, to help you understand what might be happening and to remind you that your feelings matter too.



If any of the words feel tricky, it's okay to ask a grown-up to read this with you.

We also have free e-Learning and resources for families and professionals:
childbraininjurytrust.org.uk/how-we-help/advice-information-referrals

How this might make you feel

When your brother or sister has a brain injury, it can be really hard.

You might feel:

- Left out or not important
- Sad, lonely, or angry
- Guilty or selfish
- Worried and anxious



These feelings are normal. A brain injury doesn't just affect one person; it affects the whole family, including you.

Sometimes parents need to spend a lot of time caring for your sibling, especially if there are hospital visits or extra help needed at home. That can make you feel forgotten, even though that is never the intention.

"I felt shoved to one side. No one explained what was happening, so I just felt left out."
— A sibling

Thoughts You Might Have

Many siblings share similar thoughts, such as:

- "Everything has changed, and not in a good way."
- "No one explains things, so I don't understand what's happening."
- "I feel guilty for being upset when my sibling is the one who is hurt."
- "I worry about my future and my family."
- "It's not fair, I have to do more at home now."
- "I'm scared the same thing could happen to me."



If you recognise yourself in these thoughts, you are not alone, and you are not wrong to feel this way.

When Your Sibling Comes Home

When your brother or sister leaves the hospital, it doesn't always mean everything is better. In fact, this can be the start of new challenges.

They might:

- Act differently, even though they look the same
- Need more attention or support
- Get tired more easily
- Struggle with emotions or behaviour

This can be confusing and upsetting. Friends and teachers may think things are "back to normal," even when life at home feels harder than ever.

How Life Might Have Changed

Siblings often talk about changes like:

- Schoolwork – finding it harder to concentrate or get help
- Friendships – not wanting friends to visit or stay over
- Missed experiences – holidays, days out, or school trips
- New family rules – things needing to be different now

Adjusting takes time for everyone.

Talking About How You Feel

It can be really hard to explain your feelings, especially anger, jealousy, or sadness. But talking helps.

You could:

- Talk to your parents or carers
- Speak to another trusted adult, like a teacher, relative, or family friend
- Write a letter, poem, diary, or song
- Draw how you feel

You don't even have to show anyone. Sometimes just getting it out helps.





Things You Can Ask For

It's okay to ask for support. You might need:

- A quiet space to escape and relax
- Help staying safe if your sibling becomes angry
- Permission to tell someone if you are hurt or scared
- Special one-to-one time with a parent
- Help making sure parents don't miss school events
- Time to rebuild your relationship with your sibling
- Family time where you can all have fun together

Your needs matter too.

It Won't Always Feel Like This

Living with a sibling who has an ABI can be incredibly tough, but many siblings say it also makes them stronger, more understanding, and more independent over time.

With the right support, families find new ways forward. You are not on your own.

Voices from Other Siblings

"I felt jealous and forgotten, even though I knew it wasn't my sister's fault."

"Sometimes it's frustrating, but sometimes it's also really funny."

"Everything has to go slower now, and that can be hard."

Many children and young people feel exactly like you do.

Find out more at



childbraininjurytrust.org.uk

Get in touch



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**SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY
SO THEY CAN LEARN, THRIVE, AND FEEL UNDERSTOOD.**

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