

Brain Stem

The brain stem plays a vital role in basic attention, arousal, and consciousness. All information to and from our body passes through the brain stem on the way to or from the brain. Like the frontal and temporal lobes, the brain stem is located in an area near bony protrusions making it vulnerable to damage during trauma.

Functions:

- Breathing
- Heart Rate
- Swallowing
- Reflexes to seeing and hearing (**Startle Response**).
- Controls sweating, blood pressure, digestion, temperature (**Autonomic Nervous System**).
- Affects level of alertness.
- Ability to sleep.
- Sense of balance (**Vestibular Function**).