



Whiplash advice



If you are suffering from neck pain or stiffness following an injury or car accident, you probably have received a whiplash injury. Whiplash is a common injury in which the soft tissues of the neck are sprained as a result of the body being moved backwards and forwards by an unexpected strong impact (such as a road traffic collision, a fall, or any other sudden jolt to the neck).

Symptoms often include pain and stiffness in the neck and headaches. Some people experience pain into the shoulder, between the shoulder blades, or into the arm.

How to help yourself

1. In the first 24 – 48 hours, **apply ice** (frozen peas / crushed ice wrapped in a damp tea towel), for 15 minutes every two hours. This will reduce the inflammation. If there is a lot of muscle spasm, you may prefer heat.
2. Try to **keep moving** – research shows that recovery is quicker if you continue to act as usual, returning to work and other activities as soon as possible.
3. Carry out **gentle neck exercises** – turning your head side to side, looking down and up and tilting your head side to side. Repeat each movement about 6 times, **little and often** through the day. It is normal to feel a little discomfort when moving the neck, but it will not cause further damage.
4. Try to keep **good posture** at all times –when sitting, use a small roll or cushion in the small of your back and keep your bottom and back well back against the backrest. When sleeping, use one good supportive pillow or try a small rolled up towel in the bottom of the pillowcase to support the natural curve of your neck. Don't sleep on your tummy as this overstrains the neck.
5. Take **simple regular pain relief** from the chemist, following the instructions on the packet. If you need something stronger, see your G.P.
6. Set your car **headrest height** correctly to avoid further injury in future.
7. If symptoms persist beyond a few weeks you may wish to come and have an assessment with us, so that we can **tailor a treatment plan specifically for you**.

The following symptoms are very rare, but you should consult your doctor if:

- You have experienced memory loss or unconsciousness since the incident
- You have severe pain in the back of the head, or numbness, heaviness or pins and needles in the arms or hands
- You have dizziness, ringing in the ears or blurred vision that does not disappear quickly
- Your pain lasts more than 4 to 6 weeks.



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