

What is Whiplash and How to Treat It

Ever wonder what whiplash actually is? Whiplash is an injury to the neck as a result of accelerated forward and backward motion. The long ligament that runs down the neck is often sprained while the neck is simultaneously snapped back. It is usually the result of an accident or trauma.

The effects of whiplash are joint/ligament damage of the spinal region, possible herniated disc damage, swelling, inflammation and even possible microscopic hemorrhage of those tissues. Other factors such as vehicle speed, type of vehicle, seat and headrest construction, the person's age, height and whether or not they applied the brake during the accident all affect the intensity and extent of the physical damage of whiplash.

Symptoms of Whiplash

A patient with whiplash might experience some of the following symptoms:

- Neck pain
- Neck muscle soreness and/or spasm
- Decreased range-of-motion in the neck
- Shoulder pain and soreness
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Numbness/tingling in the arms and hands
- Restriction/limited mobility of the spinal joints

The Whiplash Mystique

Often, a person would not realize they have whiplash until 72 hours after an accident due to extensive amounts of adrenaline being released into the body during the accident. Also, the body releases chemicals as a response to injury. Accident victims' bodies often are temporarily in shock as a result of experiencing physical trauma. For these reasons, many do not realize they are afflicted with whiplash until three full days after the incident.

Seek Chiropractic Treatment Immediately

Early chiropractic treatment (within the first six hours of the incident) helps the initial inflammation stage of whiplash. Your chiropractor can help determine the extent of the injury with X-rays and an initial exam. Spinal adjustments are easier to apply if the swelling is treated sooner as opposed to later. Overall, the chiropractic adjustments will help restore function to the cervical spine and neck muscles.

Long term, the whiplash patient will have decreased risk of degenerative arthritis if treated with chiropractic adjustments.

Chiropractic treatment is the most viable option for the recovery of whiplash. Extensive research has been done on the treatment of chronic whiplash, and in two separate studies it was concluded that chiropractic treatment provides effective, long-lasting results for chronic symptoms of the injury. One study yielded a 74% success rate, while the second showed 93% improvement as a result of chiropractic treatment and manipulation. The Journal of Orthopedic Medicine is quoted as saying that chiropractic is "the only proven effective treatment in chronic cases" of whiplash injury.