

# Whiplash: A Real PAIN in Your Neck

BY DR. RACHEL KOHN

We've all been there. Whiplash: the tight, stiff discomfort in the neck after an auto accident, fall, or snowboarding crash. No matter the cause, whiplash injuries are no fun for days, weeks or even months following the injury. The good news is, with chiropractic, there are now treatment options to help heal faster. The days of bulky cervical collar and immobilization are increasingly becoming a thing of the past!

What exactly is a whiplash injury you may be asking? Whiplash is caused by an abrupt backward and/or forward jerking motion of the head, often as a result of a car accident, or sports injury. More specifically whiplash injuries cause tears in the ligaments that help support, protect, and restrict excessive movement of the vertebrae, which is called a sprain. The joints in the back of the spine, called the facet joints, are covered by ligaments called facet capsules, which seem to be particularly susceptible to whiplash injury. In addition, the muscles and tendons are strained—stretched beyond their normal limits. The discs between the vertebrae, which are essentially ligaments, can be torn, potentially causing a disc herniation. The nerve roots between the vertebrae may also be stretched or compressed and become inflamed causing tingling or numbness in the arms or hands. Even though it is **very rare**, vertebrae can be fractured and/or dislocated in a whiplash injury.

The most common symptoms of whiplash are: (Keep in mind that these symptoms may take 24 hours or longer to appear!)

- Neck pain and stiffness
- Headaches
- Pain in the shoulder or between

the shoulder blades

- Low back pain
- Pain or numbness in the arm and/or hand
- Dizziness
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Irritability, sleep disturbances, fatigue

Now that we know the signs and symptoms of whiplash, let's talk about what you can do about it! Spinal manipulation and/or mobilization provided by a chiropractor can give relief in many cases of neck pain. Physical

therapy modalities, such as electrical stimulation and/or ultrasound, may provide some short-term relief. Ice and/or heat are also often used to help control pain and reduce the muscle spasm that results from whiplash injuries. Your chiropractor will also assign home stretches and exercises to help speed your healing process. One of the most important aspects of whiplash management is to stay active, unless there is some serious injury that requires immobilization. Patients should not be afraid to move and be active, within reason. It is particularly important to follow your doctor's

home care exercise plan as prescribed, so that you can achieve the best long-term benefits!

For more information about whiplash causes or treatment options, call your chiropractor today!

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## BASIC WHIPLASH SYMPTOMS



- ◆ Neck Pain
- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Shoulder Pain
- ◆ Low Back Pain
- ◆ Difficulty Swallowing
- ◆ Blurred Vision
- ◆ Ringing in the Ears
- ◆ Nausea
- ◆ Fatigue or Weakness
- ◆ Irritability
- ◆ Dizziness
- ◆ Vertigo (sense of rotation)

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Dr. Newman enjoys working with all aspects of patient's health; she is most passionate about those with chronic conditions and neurologic conditions. She also enjoys working with athletes!

Dr. Kohn enjoys helping patients of all shapes and sizes, improve their quality of life. She is not only a board certified people chiropractor, but also an IVCA Certified Animal Chiropractor!



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