



Whiplash

Introduction

Whiplash is a common neck injury often caused by a road traffic collision. A sudden movement or jolt to the neck causes the soft tissues (muscles and ligaments) around the neck to be stretched or strained.

Symptoms of whiplash

Symptoms often do not appear immediately but in the first few days following your injury.

Common symptoms are;

- Neck pain and stiffness
- Pain in the shoulders or down the arms
- Back pain
- Headaches

Less commonly;

- Pins and needles in the arms or hands
- Temporary dizziness, blurred vision or ringing in the ears



When to seek help from a doctor

If you lost consciousness or had immediate neck pain seek help urgently.

If you have a combination of the following symptoms that are not improving after a few days speak to your GP:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Dizziness | Fainting/blackout | Blurred vision | Nausea/vomiting |
| Difficulty swallowing | Slurring of speech | Severe headaches | |

Working in partnership Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust www.wiltshirehealthandcare.nhs.uk This is a controlled document. Whilst it may be printed, the electronic version saved on the T.drive is the controlled copy. Any printed copies of this document are not controlled. As a controlled document, this document should not be saved onto local drives but should be accessed from the T.drive	
Date of last review: 04/17	Document Ref: 301087
Printed on 25/01/2018 at 10:31 AM	



Early management

There are many things you can do to help ease your symptoms.

Keep moving – Try and keep your neck mobile. Continue your normal activities unless the pain is too severe. Collars and neck braces are not recommended.

Pain relief - may not be needed if the pain is mild. Painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen can be useful to ease pain. Speak to your GP if you are unsure what to take or need stronger pain relief.

Sleeping positions – Sleep on a supportive mattress and avoid sleeping on your front. Try to keep your head and neck in line with your spine. This may require 1 or 2 pillows depending on their thickness. Many people find it helpful to place a small rolled towel along the bottom edge of the pillowcase.

Good posture – this is important to aid the healing process and avoid aggravating your pain.

- When watching TV or using a computer or mobile devices keep the screen in front of you and avoid twisting or looking downwards. Keep screen time to a minimum.
- When driving avoid sitting with the shoulders hunched and chin poking forwards. Position your seat upright and practice tucking the chin in slightly.

Physiotherapy – may be helpful to assist you in reducing pain and restoring normal movement. Your GP can refer or in some cases you may be able to fill out a self-referral form. Ask at your GP surgery.

Exercises – these should be started within a few days of your injury and will help with increasing movement and decreasing pain. Try the simple exercises below. You can expect to feel some discomfort but avoid moving into excessive pain. Stop and seek help if the exercises make the pain worse. You may find it easier to start the exercises lying on your back with the neck supported and progress to doing them in sitting as your symptoms ease.

Working in partnership Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust www.wiltshirehealthandcare.nhs.uk This is a controlled document. Whilst it may be printed, the electronic version saved on the T.drive is the controlled copy. Any printed copies of this document are not controlled. As a controlled document, this document should not be saved onto local drives but should be accessed from the T.drive	
Date of last review: 04/17	Document Ref: 301087
Printed on 25/01/2018 at 10:31 AM	



Simple neck exercises

- 1) Roll your shoulders in small circles 5 times forwards then 5 times backwards.
- 2) Slowly turn your head to look over one shoulder then repeat to the other side. Repeat 5 times.
- 3) Slowly tilt your head over in one direction then tilt to the other side. Repeat 5 times.

Outcome

In many cases symptoms will begin to improve after a few days but it may take a few months for them to resolve completely. There are a number of factors that affect recovery time including severity of the injury, pre-existing neck pain or arthritis, posture, stress/anxiety and fear of movement.

Some people will have on-going pain for 6 months or more after injury. In this case you should continue exercises to mobilise your neck and speak to your GP or Physiotherapist about other strategies that may help you.

Working in partnership Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust www.wiltshirehealthandcare.nhs.uk This is a controlled document. Whilst it may be printed, the electronic version saved on the T.drive is the controlled copy. Any printed copies of this document are not controlled. As a controlled document, this document should not be saved onto local drives but should be accessed from the T.drive	
Date of last review: 04/17	Document Ref: 301087
Printed on 25/01/2018 at 10:31 AM	



Further information

Below are the telephone numbers for the Community Outpatient Physiotherapy departments. Please call your local department for any further information/guidance;

Chippenham - 01249 456451

Devizes - 01380 732520

Malmesbury - 01666 827583

Melksham - 01225 701027

Salisbury - 01722 336262 Ext 4425

Savernake - 01672 517310

Trowbridge – 01225 711341

Warminster – 01985 224716

Useful websites;

<http://wiltshirehealthandcare.nhs.uk/service/outpatient-physiotherapy/>

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/neck-pain-whiplash-injury>

www.nhs.uk/conditions/whiplash

Working in partnership
Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust
www.wiltshirehealthandcare.nhs.uk

This is a controlled document. Whilst it may be printed, the electronic version saved on the T.drive is the controlled copy. Any printed copies of this document are not controlled. As a controlled document, this document should not be saved onto local drives but should be accessed from the T.drive

Date of last review: 04/17

Document Ref: 301087

Printed on 25/01/2018 at 10:31 AM



Safeguarding

Wiltshire Health and Care have a strong commitment to care that is safe, of a high quality and that upholds our patients' rights. All our patients have the right to live lives free from abuse or neglect and, where they are able, to make or be supported to make informed decisions and choices about their treatment, care and support. Where patients are not able to make their own decisions, Wiltshire Health and Care staff are committed to ensuring that treatment, care and support is undertaken in accordance with the person's best interests. In order to fulfil these commitments, Wiltshire Health and Care follow the Safeguarding principles and responsibilities laid out in sections 42-46 of the Care Act (2014) and are informed by, and apply, the guiding principles and provisions of the Mental Capacity Act (2005). If you or your carer have any concerns about abuse, neglect or your rights in relation to care provided by Wiltshire Health and Care or any other agency or individual, please raise this directly with any Wiltshire Health and Care staff or contact the Safeguarding Adults Team by telephone on: 0300 4560111.

Wiltshire Health and Care Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any questions, or concerns, suggestions or compliments about our service, please speak to a member of staff.

This information sheet is available in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 0300 1237797 and PALS.wiltshirehealthandcare@nhs.net

Working in partnership Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust www.wiltshirehealthandcare.nhs.uk This is a controlled document. Whilst it may be printed, the electronic version saved on the T.drive is the controlled copy. Any printed copies of this document are not controlled. As a controlled document, this document should not be saved onto local drives but should be accessed from the T.drive	
Date of last review: 04/17	Document Ref: 301087
Printed on 25/01/2018 at 10:31 AM	