



Pain Relief Advice

Anti-inflammatory tablets or painkillers may have been prescribed or alternatively can be purchased from your local pharmacy.

These will help with stiffness and pain but may not be suitable for all patients. Paracetamol may be a suitable alternative.

If in doubt you should consult your GP or pharmacist before taking any medication.

Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

Call now for more information

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www.dchs.nhs.uk

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Advice Following Whiplash

This leaflet is designed to supplement the advice given by your GP or Physiotherapist. It is to help you deal with your present neck injury and enable you to look after your neck in the future. The information is written by Physiotherapists and based on the latest research.

FACTS

A whiplash injury is caused by a sudden and unrestrained movement of the head. It may be a forward, backward or sideways movement. The most common cause is a road traffic collision but a blow to the head or fall may produce similar symptoms.

It is not unusual for symptoms of pain and stiffness to be delayed for 24 or 48 hours. Severe whiplash may take many months to fully resolve, however most mild cases settle down within a few weeks.

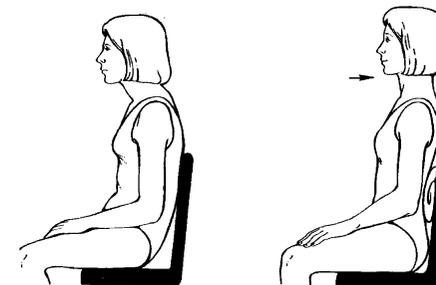
Current evidence shows that early movement of the affected joints and maintenance of normal activities will help to prevent any delay in recovery from this type of injury.

The following advice should help you to effectively manage the early stage of your whiplash injury.

POSTURE

It is common after this type of injury to allow the head to droop forward in an attempt to escape the pain. However this may increase the strain on already sensitive structures and may delay recovery.

Try to maintain an upright posture. Sit with a rolled up towel behind your lower back and your bottom as far back in the chair as possible. Your neck should be relaxed but held upright.



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HEAT / COLD

At home you can try using either heat (a hot water bottle or wheat bag) or cold (frozen peas or ice pack) to reduce pain and spasm.

To prevent a burn these items should be wrapped in a tea towel before placing on the skin.

Apply for 15 to 20 minutes up to every 2 to 3 hours if helpful.

SLEEPING

In the early days it may be helpful to avoid sleeping on your stomach. Sleeping on your side is usually the most comfortable position and a firm towel rolled up and placed inside the pillow case often helps to support the neck.



PAIN RELIEF

It is important to have adequate pain relief to allow your neck to move freely and prevent muscle spasm.

- Anti-inflammatory tablets or painkillers may have been prescribed or alternatively can be purchased from your local pharmacy.
- These will help with stiffness and pain but may not be suitable for all patients. Paracetamol may be a suitable alternative.
- If in doubt you should consult your GP or pharmacist before taking any medication. Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

EXERCISES

Stiffness often increases after a period of rest such as sleeping.

The following exercises will help you get the movement back into your neck and reduce the pain.

If the exercises are initially difficult to do in a sitting position, then they could be done lying down to begin with.

Do the exercises little and often (at least 3 times per day) and use methods of pain relief between sessions as necessary.

As your pain settles and movement improves, you may be able to progress and regain normal activity.

If your pain becomes increasingly worse after your exercises and remains worse, or if you have pins and needles or pain going down the arms which does not ease, STOP your exercises and seek advice from your doctor or physiotherapist.

If you experience increased dizziness or nausea while performing the exercises STOP and seek advice.

Sitting



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Slowly bend your head forward until you feel a stretch behind your neck. Hold for a few seconds. Repeat 5 - 10 times.

Sitting straight backed



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Pull your chin in, keeping your neck and back straight (not tipping your head forwards). Hold at the end position for a few seconds. Repeat 5 - 10 times.



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Slowly tilt your head towards one shoulder until you feel the stretch on the opposite side. Hold for a few seconds and repeat 5 - 10 times on each side.

Sitting



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Slowly turn your head to one side until you feel a stretch. Hold for a few seconds and repeat 5 - 10 times on each side.