

Pain in the Neck



It happens in an instant: you twist your neck while playing sports, falling or from being rear-ended in a car accident. You may have suffered **acceleration flexion-extension neck injury**—more commonly known as “**whiplash**.”

Whiplash occurs when an abnormal force causes your neck to move beyond its normal range of motion. Depending on the severity of your injury, symptoms can include

- **neck pain and swelling;**
- **difficulty moving your neck from side to side;**
- **muscle spasms;**
- **tenderness along the back of the neck;** or
- **shooting pain from your neck to your shoulder or arm.**

Your physician will examine you and perhaps take x-rays to ensure that there are no fractures or disc injury and that your injuries won't lead to long-term problems. He or she may recommend a cervical collar and treatment at home, including cold packs applied to the neck for 20–35 minutes 3–4 times daily, for the first 48 hours following injury, as well as pain relievers and/or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) to relieve swelling.

Once the pain subsides, you may benefit from seeing us. We can **initiate a program** to promote flexibility and blood flow. We can also **recommend exercises you can do at home** to **restore your neck to normal mobility and increase strength in the neck muscles** to help avoid injuries in the future.