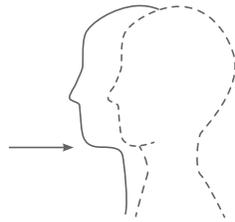
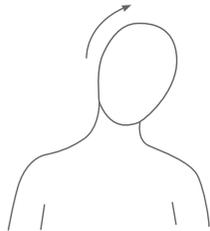


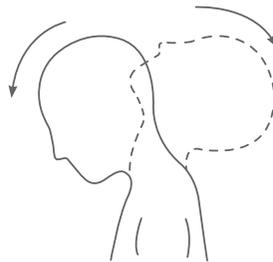
1. Gently 'retract' your head, so it is in line with your shoulders. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.



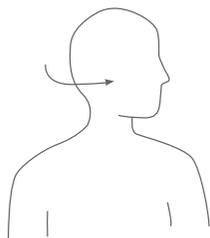
2. Slowly drop your head to the left, trying to touch your left ear to your left shoulder. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Now repeat on the right side. Repeat 3-5 times.



3. Slowly drop your head forwards, gently stretching your neck. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Return to neutral posture and relax. Slowly let your head fall backward (it is normal to feel slight lightheadedness during this exercise). Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.



4. Slowly turn your head to the left until you feel a stretch. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Return to neutral. Repeat on the right side. Repeat 3-5 times.



Patient Advice and Liaison Service

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) provides confidential help and advice to patients and carers. For further information please contact the PALS team on **020 8937 7173** or email pals@barnet.nhs.uk

If you require this information in large print, please contact the Communications Department on **020 8937 7644**

If you need an interpreter to explain this document, please telephone **020 8732 6454**

Gujarati આ દસ્તાવેજ તમને સમજાવી શકે એવા એક દુભાષિયાની જરૂર હોય, તો કૃપા કરી ૦૨૦ ૮૭૩૨ ૬૪૫૪ પર ટેલિફોન કરો.

Farsi شفاہی نیاز دارید، لطفاً با 020 8732 6454 تماس بگیرید. اگر برای دریافت توضیح در مورد این سند به مترجم

Turkish Eğer bu belgeyi size birisinin tercüme etmesini istiyorsanız, lütfen şu numarayı arayın: 020 8732 6454

Cantonese 如果你需要一名翻譯來解釋這篇文件，請致電 020 8732 6454

Arabic المستند، الرجاء الإتصال على رقم 020 8732 6454 إذا كنت في حاجة إلى مترجم فوري لشرح هذا

Somali Haddii aad u baahan tahay turjume kuu sharxa dokumentigan, fadlan soo wac talefoonkan 020 8732 6454

Mandarin 如果你需要一名翻译来解释这篇文件，请致电 020 8732 6454

Polish Jeżeli do wyjaśnienia niniejszego dokumentu potrzebny jest tłumacz, proszę zadzwonić pod numer 020 8732 6454

Albanian Nëse ju nevojitet përkthyes për t'ju shpjeguar këtë dokument, ju lutemi telefononi 020 8732 6454

Whiplash injury

Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Service



Treatment and advice

What is whiplash?

'Whiplash' is the term often given when a person experiences neck or back pain after a car accident. Similar injuries can also occur if the body is subjected to sudden or unexpected movements, such as a slip or fall. The pain experienced by such injuries is due to the stretching of ligaments, muscles and nerves in the spine due to the sudden, unguarded movement at the moment of impact.

Whiplash injuries are rarely serious and the vast majority although extremely painful, resolve fully in a few days or weeks.

What can I do to help myself?

The most important thing to do after a whiplash injury is to keep moving and resume normal activities as soon as possible. It is important that you have good pain control, which will help you with your recovery. It is best to seek advice from a pharmacist or your GP regarding the best type of painkillers for you.

In the first 48 hours of injury, using a cold pack (or bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) may provide pain relief. After 48 hours, a hot pack, hot water bottle, hot bath or shower may be more effective. Be careful when applying heat or cold packs directly to the skin, and do not apply for more than 15 minutes at a time.

Treatment and advice

How long will it take to recover?

This will vary from person to person as it is influenced by a number of factors, including: severity of the injury, age, activity level, medication, pre-existing medical conditions, etc. As previously mentioned, most whiplash injuries resolve in a few days or weeks. If symptoms are still present after a few weeks, however, then full recovery may take many months. During recovery it is normal to have good and bad days.

When should I seek help?

If you have had a major accident, it is advisable to go to an A&E department, walk-in centre or see your GP, just to make sure there is no serious damage. This is especially advisable if you experience any of the following:

- Loss of consciousness or fainting
- Disturbed vision, dizziness or difficulties with speech or swallowing
- Severe muscle spasm or abnormal posture of the neck
- Difficulties passing urine or loss of bowel control
- Pins and needles, numbness or weakness in the arms/hands or legs/feet.

Although these symptoms seem frightening, they are very rare. Signs of serious injury can be quickly assessed by consulting a doctor or similar specialist. Usually further investigation such as X-ray or MRI scans are not needed, although may be useful in some cases.

Exercises

Why is it necessary for me to do the exercises?

Movement and exercise helps by increasing blood flow to the area. This 'flushes out' the chemicals responsible for pain and inflammation, aiding the healing process of damaged soft-tissues. Specific exercises as discussed below and general exercises such as walking and swimming can help the body to release endorphins, a natural painkiller.

Exercises

There is no single exercise that is right for everyone, so it is worth trying a few to see what feels best for you. In general you should gently move your head in all directions (as shown overleaf) little and often throughout the day (about every hour). You should move to the point of pain, then gradually try to go a bit further each time. It is normal to feel some pain while doing these exercises. This will ease gradually as your body gets used to the movement.