

~~Meta: Whiplash injuries are a common injury in a car accident. Here's what you should know.~~

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## Whiplash: What You Should Know

Whiplash is not an injury to be taken lightly. Out of all injuries suffered in automobile accidents, whiplash is by far the most common. Even a slow-moving car accident (<20mph) can cause pain and discomfort for years after the initial incident.

Many times whiplash injuries will not fully manifest themselves for several days following an accident. This is why it is always better to not only know your rights if you've been involved in an automobile accident, but to be prepared to make your case if you've suffered a whiplash injury.

### Whiplash Symptoms

According to the Mayo Clinic, whiplash is defined as "a neck injury due to forceful, rapid back-and-forth movement of the neck, like the cracking of a whip." Statistics show that there are close to 120,000 whiplash injuries in the United States each year. Some of the common whiplash symptoms are chronic pain, tenderness, limited range of motion, tightness or stiffness, and headaches emanating from the base of the skull to the top of the forehead.

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### Whiplash Treatment

The Mayo Clinic suggests that the first step to treat a whiplash injury is to ice your neck immediately following the accident. Icing both reduces swelling and pain. Non-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen (Advil) and naproxen (Aleve) are also useful in reducing pain and swelling; always check with your doctor before taking any medicine, though, in order to avoid any negative side effects. After swelling has gone down, applying a heated towel or soaking in a hot bath may help to reduce discomfort.

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In some instances, a whiplash injury will be so severe a neck brace is required. Wearing a neck brace for too long, however, could prove detrimental and actually weaken neck muscles. Massage is also another avenue of recovery if previous treatment plans are inadequate.

### Window of Recovery

Like most injuries, recovery time depends on the extent of the damage. Whiplash injuries may heal after just a few days, while others could well linger for months, if not years. Once your doctor has cleared you for rehabilitation it is important to begin a regiment of stretching exercises in order to re-strengthen your injured muscles and ligaments. Remember, however, that patience is a virtue during the recovery process. Rushing back to normal activity too soon may cause more damage in the long run.

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If you've been in a car accident and suspect you may have incurred a whiplash injury, call The Advocates for a free consultation. Our experienced staff is here to help you begin on the road to recovery. Don't hesitate to call us today!

#### References:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/whiplash/basics/definition/con-20033090>