

# Topic of the Week

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WE CARE ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

## The Deceiving Nature of Whiplash

Presented by: Mark J. Glesener, D.C.

The traffic light ahead turns red. You bring your vehicle to a stop. Then BANG! Your head snaps forward then backward. Your car is hurtled a foot into the intersection. You realize almost immediately what just happened. Your vehicle was rear ended. Other than being startled by the event, you're okay... or are you?

Despite feeling fine, you may have just received a common and sometimes serious injury: whiplash. Your chiropractor can tell you that it's often a deceiving injury.

### Whiplash Damage

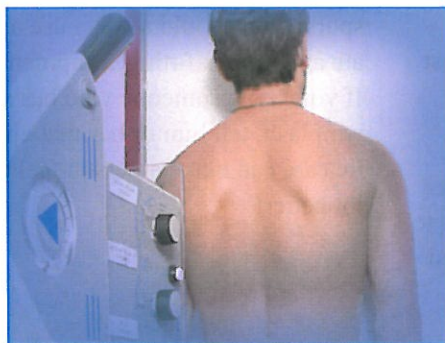
When your vehicle is rear ended, your neck can get stretched beyond its natural range of motion. Whiplash can occur at speeds as low as 5 mph.



You may feel pain quickly or you may not develop symptoms for several hours, weeks, or months. Your neck (cervical spine) contains muscles, ligaments, tendons, discs, joints and nerves confined to a relatively small area. And whiplash can injure all these body components.

Although it happens most frequently in rear-end vehicle collisions, whiplash can occur in other situations - especially in the sports of football, gymnastics, boxing and contact martial arts.

Besides the neck and upper back, pain from a whiplash may extend into other areas of the body, such as the arms and shoulders. You may also suffer muscle stiffness, burning or tingling sensations as well as headaches and numbness. Even if you don't have any immediate whiplash symptoms, you should visit your chiropractor as soon as possible.



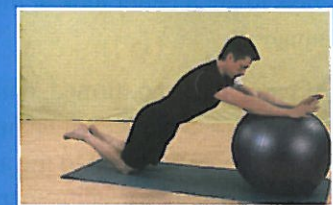
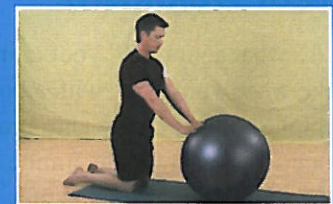
### Exercise of the Week Abdominal Roll-Out from Kneeling Position

*(Consult your chiropractor before engaging in this or any other exercise.)*

Difficulty: Medium to High

Start on knees, body straight, hands resting on ball. Keeping arms straight, roll forward until you feel a moderate abdominal strain with minimal strain in lower back. Keep torso strong and in a straight position as you roll forward. Hold for 1-2 counts in outstretched position, then roll back to start position.

Repeat 4-10 times.



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## What Can Affect Whiplash Recovery?

The severity of your whiplash and recovery from it depends on many factors. Your age, sex, physical condition, and posture can have a major effect on the acuteness and length of symptoms.

- ▶ As you age, you lose flexibility and strength in your neck, disc and ligaments. This is why older adults may require more extensive rehabilitation for this injury.
- ▶ Women suffer whiplash more than men. Experts believe this could be because men have stronger neck muscles and women have smaller bone structures.
- ▶ Health conditions like arthritis and previous whiplash injuries can play a role.
- ▶ If you're a smoker or you don't exercise, your chances of healing quickly are reduced.
- ▶ Poor posture at the time of impact can worsen whiplash.
- ▶ If your driver seat's headrest is not at the appropriate height, you may endure a more intense injury.

## How Does Chiropractic Treat Whiplash?

So what action will your chiropractor take when you arrive with a possible whiplash injury? Your chiropractor will conduct an exam to determine the extent of any injuries and may request x-rays to get a better look at the damage.

If whiplash is confirmed, chiropractors may use a number of techniques to restore proper function to the affected areas. They may use adjustments to reduce constriction in the joints and improve mobility.

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They may also employ techniques to relax and gently stretch the muscles. Applying pressure to specific trigger points on the body helps relieve pain and can restore injured areas to their normal state.

Your chiropractor may also get you to perform specific exercises and stretches during the healing process. Exercises can help stabilize and improve coordination in the neck and prevent improper movement. Most whiplash cases are resolved within a few weeks. However, some people may endure symptoms well beyond this period. Fortunately, research has shown that chiropractic is an extremely effective approach to healing whiplash. In a study conducted by the *Journal of Orthopaedic Medicine*, researchers found 74% of those people in the study treated for whiplash with chiropractic care showed improvement. The researchers proclaimed, "The results from this study provide further evidence that chiropractic is an effective treatment for chronic whiplash symptoms."<sup>1</sup> The researchers also noted that other treatments for whiplash were disappointing.<sup>1</sup>

## Preventing Whiplash

There are steps you can take to minimize the risk of whiplash. Make sure your vehicle's headrests are in the right position. The center back of your head should touch the center of the headrest or higher. When engaging in sports, you should always use appropriate and proper-fitting equipment. If you know someone who has suffered whiplash, tell him or her that chiropractic care can make a person feel a whole lot better!

## Quote of the Week

"Procrastination is the thief of health."

- B.J. Palmer, DC

For more health tips, visit online [www.citruspie.com](http://www.citruspie.com)



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## Topic of the Week

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