



# *Whiplash* and Associated Disorders

## **Whiplash and Associated Disorders**

Whiplash-Associated Disorders (WAD) has been adopted as the definition of acute or sub-acute neck pain. WAD may result from car, workplace or sporting accidents.

## **What are the common signs and symptoms of WAD?**

The symptoms associated with WAD can vary, and may include headaches, neck or arm pain, dizziness, fatigue, difficulty sleeping, inability to concentrate, blurred vision, or a feeling that the head has to be supported ("heavy head syndrome").

## **What should I do if I have recently been involved in a car accident?**

If you have recently suffered a motor vehicle accident you will need to consult your local doctor for an initial examination and appropriate diagnostic testing. It is to be remembered that over 60% of all whiplash injuries will fully recover with time, appropriate treatment and management from a qualified health practitioner.

## **Do I need an X-ray?**

Not necessarily. Often the damage caused by a whiplash injury will not show up on standard medical tests such as X-ray or CT scans. Depending on the severity of your symptoms, your treating practitioner will make the appropriate recommendations regarding further diagnostic testing.

## **What Should I Do In The First Week Following A Whiplash Injury?**

### **Stage 1: Inflammatory Stage (1 -4 days)**

Rest by lying on your back on the bed rather than the couch.

Neck rotations (6 - 10 every hour) can be performed in this position.

Also include 6 – 10 repetitions of each of shoulder shrugs/circles and basic arm/shoulder range of motion exercises every hour. Consult your treating practitioner for exercise instructions.

Consult your treating practitioner about advice regarding the application of heat and/or ice.

Walking for 15-20 minute periods 2 -3 times each day in this phase is recommended.

Refrain from sport of moderate intensity. NO CONTACT SPORT.

### **Stage 2: Gradual Return To Full Activity (3 – 6 weeks)**

This phase may extend 3 - 6 weeks post whiplash trauma. Consult your treating practitioner regarding the use of soft tissue, manipulation and specific neck and shoulder rehabilitation exercises.

**For further information about Whiplash and Associated Disorders visit:**

**[www.whiplashcentre.com](http://www.whiplashcentre.com)**