

# Cervical Collar

## Patient information

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگری یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

Southport Hospital  
Town Lane,  
Kew,  
Southport,  
Merseyside,  
PR8 6PN  
Telephone:  
01704 547 471

Ormskirk Hospital  
Dicconson Way,  
Wigan Road,  
Ormskirk,  
Lancashire,  
L39 2AZ  
Telephone:  
01695 577 111

## What is a Cervical Collar?

A cervical collar is a neck brace that limits the movement of your neck whilst providing support and hopefully reducing pain in the affected area.

The hard collar is a two-piece rigid neck brace, held together by Velcro straps. The brace support is provided by plastic on the outside and soft pads on the inside. The soft pads protect your skin from the plastic.



## Other useful numbers/contacts

NHS 111/GP

Smoking:

(Sefton) Stop Smoking Helpline-  
0300 100 1000

(West Lancs) Stop Smoking Helpline  
0800 328 6297

Drug and Alcohol Support:

(Sefton) Change Grow Live  
0151 203 9755

(West Lans)  
0808 164 0074 or  
0808 169 8673

Mental Health:  
(Sefton) Talking Matters  
0300 303 2708

Urgent support talk line  
0800 145 6570

(West Lancs) Lancashire Mind  
0125732660

### Contacts

AED Therapy:  
01704 7043831

Trauma and Orthopaedic Therapy Office:  
01704 704815

Cervical collars are needed for many reasons but the most common is for fracture (broken bone) in the neck. The collar will encourage correct spinal alignment, reduce movement at your neck and aim to protect you from developing further problems.

If the collar is not worn as advised there is a risk, although rare, that you may damage your spinal cord and cause weakness and altered sensation to your arms and legs.

Extreme damage to your spinal cord may also affect your breathing, bladder, bowel and sexual function. This could result in mild to severe paralysis.

### How long will I need it for?

The reason you require the collar and length of time it takes for your neck to heal will determine the length of time it needs to be worn.

Your consultant will make this decision. Your therapist will be aware and can guide you..

## Complications

The collar limits movement, however, it does not prevent movement completely. It is important you are aware of your posture and ensure the collar is fitted tightly enough to give your neck the support it needs but not completely restrictive so that it affects your breathing and swallowing.

It is important the collar is removed daily (unless you have been advised not to) to be able to wash, dry and check your skin. If the collar is not on tightly enough or not cleaned, it can rub and cause pressure sores or skin irritation.

## Infection control request

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace.

We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment.

Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you.

Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

You will be given individual instructions as to how to change your collar.

You may need additional family/carer support.

You cannot do this safely yourself.

- Ensure your shoulders, neck and head are completely supported (either by a chair or bed. If lying in bed, do not use a pillow).
- Remove the cervical collar by releasing the Velcro straps, pull the front panel of the collar away from your neck and slowly slide out the back panel from one side of your neck, pushing the collar into the bed and keeping your neck as still as possible.
- Have someone check your neck/use a mirror to ensure there are no areas of concern.
- Gently wash your neck remembering to keep your neck as still as possible. Rinse any soap away and ensure your neck is completely dry before reapplying the collar.

- Apply the dry/new collar by first sliding the back panel behind the neck, make sure it is centred evenly. For best fitting, ensure the Velcro straps are under your ear lobes. Long hair should be placed outside of the collar and necklaces removed.
- Place the front piece of the collar around the neck ensuring it is central and the chin is sitting on the chin pad.
- Whilst holding the front securely, curl the ends of the front panel snugly against your neck.
- Attach the back Velcro straps to the front, tightening one at a time until they are in the original position and even both sides.



### If you develop any of the symptoms below

- Any weakness to your arms or your legs.
- Have difficulty passing urine.
- Have any new incontinence (loss of control) to your bladder or bowels.
- A loss of sensation in your saddle area (the area you would wipe when toileting).

### Seek urgent medical attention

If you have any other questions or concerns about your collar, please call:

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on this telephone number :

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**5. You can change your collar and check your skin:**

Independently

With assistance of 1 person

With assistance of 2 people

**6. You can change your collar and check your skin only in:**

Lying

Sitting

**7. Any Questions?**

The length of time you wear your collar will be determined on an individual basis as healing rates can vary.

Your consultant will give you advice regarding this. You can clarify this with your therapist.

Once out of the collar you should try to maintain a good upright posture. Heavy lifting should be avoided initially and return to activity should be controlled.

## Important points to remember:

- The collar should be tight but comfortable. You should be able to breathe and swallow normally.
- The collar should be kept on at all times other than removal for washing your neck unless you have received different instructions from the professionals looking after you.
- The collar should be removed once daily for washing and checking your skin and exchanging the pads for clean ones. You will be told if there is a specific position to be in when removing the collar/applying new one.
- The pads within the collar are removable.

## ... Continued

### 2. When does the collar need to be worn?

24 hrs a day

When walking around only

Other \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Does the collar need to be worn in bed?

Yes

No

### 4. Can the collar be removed for showering/bathing?

No

Yes in standing

Yes in sitting



Patient Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The collar you have been provided is:  
\_\_\_\_\_

For an injury to your:  
\_\_\_\_\_

The clinician fitting your collar will clearly circle below the correct advice for you.

### 1. How long does the collar need to be worn?

6 weeks    3 months

Other \_\_\_\_\_

- It is important to avoid bleach and wash only with soap and hot water. They should be fully dry before wearing them and the collar should not be worn without them. The pads protect your skin from the plastic.
- If you feel you may need further guidance on changing your collar or dressing techniques, please discuss this with the nurse/physiotherapist/occupational therapist looking after you.

## Pain management

The orthopaedic team will work with you to ensure your pain is controlled as effectively as possible.

You will be sent home with the appropriate medications but if you require more or further advice about your pain control you should you should talk to your GP.

**Avoid** the lifting of any heavy objects. Make sure any item you need is within easy reach or ask someone to do this for you.

**Avoid** twisting or bending your neck

**Avoid** lying on your stomach

You must tell the DVLA if you have had an injury to your spine. You are typically asked to complete the DVLA G1 form.

Given everyone's recovery time will vary; the time to return to driving will vary. You must be able to safely perform an emergency stop.

You may be required to visit your GP for advice regarding when's best for you to return to driving.

Further information is available on the DVLA website.