



Southport and  
Ormskirk Hospital  
NHS Trust

# **PATIENT INFORMATION**

## **Whiplash**

Accident & Emergency Department



## **Whiplash**

A whiplash injury is a type of neck injury caused by sudden movements of the head, forward, backwards and sideways.

This causes the soft tissues of the neck to become stretched and damaged-sprained.

## **Causes of Whiplash**

- Road traffic collisions
- A sudden blow to the head-for example in sports such as rugby or boxing
- A fall where the head is suddenly jolted backwards
- Being struck on the head by a heavy solid object

## **Treatment**

It is important not to rest your neck for long periods, move your neck as the pain allows.

Keeping your neck mobile will improve its movement and speed up your recovery.

Take over the counter pain killers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen. Be careful if you are sensitive to anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen, or have asthma, stomach ulcers or indigestion.

Ask your pharmacist for advice if needed.

An ice pack of frozen peas in a tea towel applied to the neck for 10 minutes several times a day may help in the first few days.

A covered hot water bottle applied to the neck for 10 minutes in the next few days after the ice packs may help.

A good posture and one supportive pillow to sleep may also help.

Exercises - please see the neck exercises sheet.

## **Recovery**

Whiplash will often get better on its own or after some simple treatment in a few weeks or months.

Some patients may need physiotherapy and on-going treatment.

Any early concerns should be reviewed in the emergency department or walk in centre.

Later concerns please contact your GP for advice.

## **Road Traffic Collisions**

Advice on what to do after an unexpected traumatic event, such as a road traffic collision.

### **Support from others**

Talk to your family and friends.

Talk to colleagues or neighbours if you don't want to worry your family.

Having other people around can aid in your recovery.

### **Look after your health and wellbeing**

This may include taking a break to deal with your experiences.

Try to eat a healthy diet.

Try some simple exercise, such as a short walk each day.

### **Seek professional help from your GP**

If you don't have anyone to talk to.

If your feelings have not returned to normal after six weeks.

If your work or studies are affected.

If you are using alcohol or drugs to cope

Please seek further medical advice as needed.





**Please call 01704 704714 if you need  
this leaflet in an alternative format**

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Telephone (01695) 656680  
Email [soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net)

Please remember to complete the **attached** *Friends and Family Test*.

Alternatively, you can complete the *Friends and Family Test* on-line by going to:  
[southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT](https://southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT)

**Thank you**

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