



WHIPLASH

What is Whiplash?

Whiplash is most commonly associated with rear-end car collisions in which the heads of those in the front car are suddenly snapped back and forth by the impact. It is more accurately called cervical acceleration/deceleration (CAD) trauma or syndrome, which describes the rapid movements that can injure the vertebrae of the neck and the muscles and ligaments that support them.

Who Suffers from Whiplash?

Anyone can be subjected to whiplash, even in a low-force car crash at speeds as low as ten mph. But injuries associated with whiplash can also result from other mishaps in which the head is pushed or jerked beyond its normal range of motion. Whiplash most commonly causes serious and lingering neck pain, but there may also be back pain, headaches, and dizziness. Inasmuch as bruising of the brain can sometimes occur in auto accidents and similarly severe causes of whiplash, some victims have experienced blurred vision, ringing in the ears, nausea, and numbness. Although the classic symptoms of whiplash may subside after a few weeks to months of appropriate care, it's estimated that nearly one in four cases will become chronic, resulting in long-term discomfort and disability.

What Can a Doctor of Chiropractic Do?

The sudden accident that caused the whiplash in the first place may fade into memory, but the physical and psychological damage of whiplash can become chronic, eroding a victim's quality of life. Chiropractic techniques and chiropractors' skills are particularly well-suited to relieving the neck pain and other debilitating effects of whiplash

because they can:

- restore movement lost after the accident
- overcome muscle weakness and enhance muscle tone
- speed recovery
- diminish chronic symptoms that can persist or recur over many years

Chiropractic may offer the best opportunity for relief from the pain of whiplash, according to a study published in the *Journal of Orthopaedic Medicine*. Patients with chronic whiplash symptoms were divided into three groups, based upon the nature and severity of their symptoms. Results showed that patients with neck pain, restricted neck range of motion, and neurological symptoms improved under chiropractic care, with more than 85 percent reporting "major benefit," more than 33.5 percent improving by two symptom grades, and 31 percent reporting relief from all symptoms.

Repeated and effective chiropractic adjustments have proved successful for many thousands of patients. Chiropractic can, in many cases, significantly reduce patients' distress and allow them to return to their normal activities rather than suffering with chronic pain, as so many whiplash victims do long after their accidents.

Dr. Randal Trester is a chiropractor with a special emphasis in chronic pain and injury rehabilitation, and is certified in pre- and postnatal care. His passion is sharing the powerful effects that chiropractic care has on general health, athletic performance, and pregnancy. He helps people lead healthier lives by focusing on wellness and prevention. He has a family practice in Kitsilano at West 1st Chiropractic Wellness Centre, 3-1864 West 1st Avenue. Contact Dr. Trester at 604.736.8353 or at drtrester@viewmagazine.ca.

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