

## **WHIPLASH INJURIES**

A whiplash injury involves bony or soft tissue injuries to the neck as a result of acceleration/deceleration forces. It usually results from a rear end or side impact motor vehicle accident. This injury commonly leads to Neck pain, arm and shoulder pain and headaches.

### **How long does a whiplash injury take to get better?**

The recovery time for a whiplash injury is very variable. Some will recover completely after a day or two; others will take over 12 months until full recovery.

Occasionally this is because some of the tissue involved is relatively slow to heal. However, many people suffer much longer than they need to because of weakness through inactivity in the first few days and weeks after injury.

By following the advice in this leaflet, you can help limit pain and immobility.

### **Exercises**

Tissues heal better when encouraged to move. It is therefore best to avoid bed rest and ensure that regular movement and exercise is undertaken.

- Turn the head to one side then to the other side.
- Facing forward, tilt the head sideways.
- Facing straight ahead, tuck the chin backwards making a double chin.
- Bend your neck forwards, looking downward.
- Arch your neck backwards, looking upwards.

### **Hold each for 5 seconds**

### **When to seek medical advice**

It is advisable to seek further guidance from your Doctor if you are suffering from any of the following symptoms as a result of your whiplash injury:

- Drop attacks (falling to the floor for no apparent reason)
- Dizziness
- Blurred or double vision
- Prolonged pins and needles or numbness in your arms and hands
- Any other unusual symptoms that you have not been warned about

### **Posture**

Poor posture can contribute to poor healing of tissues following whiplash. Try to maintain your normal spinal curves by doing the following:

- Sit up tall and avoid slouching, stand and walk tall. Avoid stooping.
- Ensure that work surfaces are at a comfortable height.
- Use one good pillow or two thin pillows to support the neck at night.