

WHIPLASH INJURY

Causes: A sudden acceleration-deceleration of the head, most often during a motor vehicle accident, causing the cervical spine to move in hyperextension and/or hyperflexion causing injury to any of the following: bony structures, ligaments, muscles, nerves and connective tissues. Medically, whiplash is categorized into types WAD 0-IV, where WAD refers to “whiplash associated disorder.”

Symptoms: Headache and/or neck pain that is constant or worsened with movement, back pain, dizziness, ringing in ears, visual disturbances, difficulty sleeping due to pain, difficulty concentrating, fatigue, or arm pain/weakness.

*Symptoms can be delayed for up to 48 hours after the injury.

Examples: WAD 0, WAD I, WAD II, WAD III and WAD IV.

How our experts can help:

Chiropractors typically assess and treat patients who may be classified as WAD I, II and III (referral may be needed based on evaluation). Depending on the findings of the history and patient examination, the chiropractor may recommend patient reassurance, manual therapies, modalities and lifestyle recommendations including rehabilitation. However, the plan of management will be individualized to the patient’s needs and examination findings. The treatment options may include:

- Patient education and reassurance
- Manipulation and mobilization
- Soft tissue therapy
- Modalities including electrical stimulation, acupuncture, ultrasound etc.
- Rehabilitation and exercises
- Ergonomic and lifestyle changes
- Referral and co-management