

Patient Information Center: Recovering From Car Accidents

Q: What are the stages of recovery from whiplash injury?

A: The recovery phase proceeds in a natural sequence. The first stage of recovery is to relieve your pain, and support or protect the injured area. Treatment then shifts to restoring normal movement and position of the spinal vertebrae, and healing the injured muscles and ligaments as completely as possible. Attention to the soft tissues is critical to insure that the affected nerves heal properly.

As the recovery phase proceeds, the treatment frequency usually decreases. Nevertheless, your chiropractor will continue to monitor the healing process for evidence of full recovery, or, in some cases, the development of chronic problems.

In the early stages of recovery it is difficult to know whether an individual will again completely recover or develop chronic problems. This is why you are likely to be under careful observation for at least six months following a whiplash type injury.

Understanding your injury and properly treating it can be complicated, but your chiropractor is well trained to help you. Make it a point to consult your chiropractor as soon as possible after any type of injury.

Q: How long will it take for me to recover from my whiplash injury?

A: It is nearly impossible to predict the length of treatment for whiplash injury because there are so many variables involved. If the whiplash is due to an automobile accident, the speed, direction, and angle of the impact will affect the type and severity of an injury. In order to assess the extent of your injuries, your chiropractor might ask some of the following questions: Did you have time to brace yourself for the impact? Were you wearing a seatbelt? Were you wearing it properly? Where were you sitting in the car? Where did the other car hit the car you were in? Can you recall how your posture was at the moment of impact?

Some general considerations that also affect the length and speed of your recovery are your age, general health, spinal health, desire to get well, and length of time before seeking chiropractic care.

Source: (Iowa Chiropractic Society)