

## Whiplash and Neck Injuries in Car Accidents

### Whiplash is one of the most common types of car accident injuries

Whiplash and other neck injuries sustained in a [car accident](#) can have a significant impact on the lives of crash victims. The pain and stiffness associated with these injuries can severely limit mobility and daily activities, making simple tasks like driving, working at a computer, or even turning your head extremely challenging and painful.

These physical limitations can result in prolonged absences from work or even loss of employment for people working in physically demanding jobs. Additionally, the financial burden of medical treatments, potential long-term care, and loss of income can strain personal finances and lead to further stress and anxiety.

If you suffered whiplash or another type of neck injury in a crash, an experienced car accident attorney from our Maryland law firm can help you learn more about your rights and legal options for recovering compensation.

### What is whiplash?

Whiplash is a neck injury that often occurs due to a rapid back-and-forth movement of the neck, similar to the cracking of a whip. This type of motion can cause the muscles, tendons, and ligaments in the neck to stretch and tear. Whiplash is most commonly associated with [rear-end accidents](#) but can also occur in other types of crashes.

### What other types of neck injuries can happen in a crash?

In addition to a whiplash injury, car accidents can cause several other types of neck injuries due to the violent forces involved during a collision. Here are some common neck injuries that can occur:

- **Cervical fractures:** A fracture in one or more of the cervical vertebrae (the bones in the neck part of the spine) can occur when there is a high-impact force. These fractures are serious injuries that can lead to significant spinal instability and potentially to spinal cord injury.
- **Herniated discs:** The impact of a car accident can rupture or bulge the discs between the vertebrae, leading to a herniated disc. This condition can cause nerve irritation, pain, numbness, or weakness extending from the neck into the arms and hands.
- **Soft tissue injuries:** In addition to whiplash, other soft tissue injuries, such as strains or sprains of the muscles, tendons, and ligaments in the neck, can occur. These are generally less severe than whiplash but can still cause pain and reduced mobility.

Prompt diagnosis and treatment are crucial for any neck injury resulting from a car accident to manage pain, reduce the risk of further damage, and begin the recovery process.

## How do whiplash and other neck injuries happen in a car accident?

These injuries typically occur as a result of the sudden and forceful movement of the head and neck. There are several factors during a collision that lead to injury:

- **Rapid acceleration-deceleration:** Most often associated with rear-end collisions, the force of the impact causes the body to be pushed forward while the head remains behind momentarily. This delay causes the neck to snap rapidly backward.
- **Hyperextension and hyperflexion:** Following the initial backward snap (hyperextension), the head then whips forward (hyperflexion). This rapid forward and backward motion strains or tears the neck's muscles, tendons, and ligaments. It can also cause the cervical spine vertebrae to move out of their normal alignment.
- **Sudden stops:** Even in frontal or side-impact collisions, the sudden stopping of the car can cause similar whiplash movements as the body is jerked forward or sideways by the impact and then restrained by the seat belt.
- **Contact with the car interior:** In some cases, the head might also strike an object like a steering wheel, dashboard, or window. This not only can make the whiplash injury worse but also lead to other types of neck injuries, including fractures or more severe soft tissue damage.

Other factors that can affect the severity of injury include the speed at impact, the use of seat belts, and the position of the headrest.

## What are the symptoms of whiplash and other neck injuries?

Whiplash and other neck injuries can cause a variety of symptoms, which may vary in severity depending on the nature of the injury. Here are some common symptoms associated with whiplash and other neck injuries:

### Whiplash symptoms

- **Neck pain and stiffness:** This is the most common symptom. The pain might worsen with movement.
- **Loss of range of motion in the neck:** You may not be able to move your neck as you normally would.
- **Headaches:** These often start at the base of the skull and move towards the forehead.
- **Tenderness or pain in the shoulder, upper back, or arms:** This can include an increased sensitivity to touch.
- **Tingling or numbness:** This might occur in the arms and is caused by nerve irritation or damage.
- **Fatigue.**
- **Dizziness.**

### Other neck injury symptoms

In addition to the typical symptoms of whiplash, other neck injuries from accidents might include:

- **Severe, sharp pain:** This can be caused by fractures, dislocations, or nerve damage.
- **Muscle spasms:** Severe and sudden contractions of the muscles in the neck.
- **Swelling and bruising:** Visible swelling or bruising on the neck indicating trauma.
- **Changes in reflexes, strength, or sensation:** Indicating possible nerve or spinal cord involvement.
- **Difficulty swallowing or breathing:** Due to swelling or displacement of the structures in the neck.
- **Unusual lumps or deformity:** Suggesting possible fractures or dislocations.

If you experience any of these symptoms following a car accident, it is important to seek medical attention immediately.

### **Treatment for whiplash and other neck injuries**

Initial treatment for whiplash usually involves rest to avoid aggravating symptoms. Over-the-counter pain relievers or prescription medication can help with pain management. Applying heat or cold packs to the neck can help reduce pain and swelling. Physical therapy can strengthen the neck muscles and improve mobility.

Treatment for other neck injuries can vary depending on the type and severity of the injury. But it may involve:

- **Immobilization:** Wearing a neck brace or other device can help keep the neck stable and prevent further injury while bones heal.
- **Surgery:** Surgical interventions may be required to realign the vertebrae, remove parts of damaged discs, or repair fractures.
- **Medication:** Pain relievers, corticosteroids, or muscle relaxants may be used to reduce pain and inflammation.
- **Physical therapy:** Exercises can help restore function and strengthen muscles.

Your doctor will determine the appropriate treatment plan for you.

### **Can I recover financial compensation for whiplash?**

You can file a claim for financial compensation for whiplash and other neck injuries suffered in a car accident if the accident was caused by another party's negligence. For example, the other driver who caused the crash may have been speeding, driving aggressively, or texting behind the wheel.

If you were injured, you can seek compensation for: :

- **Medical expenses:** These include all current and future medical-related expenses that result from the injury. Examples include costs for emergency care, hospitalization, surgery, medication, physical therapy, and any ongoing rehabilitation.
- **Lost wages:** If your injuries prevent you from working, you can claim compensation for lost wages. If the injuries affect your ability to earn money in the future, you may also be eligible for compensation for loss of earning capacity.
- **Pain and suffering:** This category of compensation is intended to cover the physical pain and emotional distress you endure as a result of the accident and your injuries. Calculating pain and suffering can be complex as it involves both the physical pain and the psychological impact.

### **How a whiplash lawyer can help**

If you suffered whiplash or some other type of neck injury in a car accident, an attorney can play a crucial role in protecting your rights and helping you navigate the often complex process of recovering compensation. A lawyer can:

- **Handle all communications with insurance providers**, help submit claims properly, and negotiate with insurance adjusters on your behalf
- **Gather evidence** such as accident reports, witness statements, medical records, and expert testimonies
- **Calculate the total impact of your injuries** on your financial and personal life to determine the value of your claim
- **Negotiate with the insurance company** to reach a settlement that meets your needs
- **Fight for you in court** if a settlement can't be reached.

The experienced car accident attorneys at [Goldberg Finnegan](#) in Silver Spring, Maryland, have been fighting for the injured since 1999. We feel it's important to take the time to learn more about our clients and build a case that meets their needs. We're proud of the case results we've obtained for injured victims.

If you suffered whiplash or another neck injury in a Maryland car accident, learn more about how we can help. [Contact us](#) for a free consultation. We serve Montgomery County and Prince George's County, as well as Howard, Frederick, and Charles counties.