

Why You Should Be Very Concerned About...

Whiplash

Picture this: It's Memorial Day Weekend. You've decided to get away for a few days with your spouse and kids. You all hop into your car and head for the beach. When you hit the road it seems that everyone else in town had the same idea. The roads are packed. So you are moving along in traffic when suddenly someone from behind... *hits your car*. After the impact you realize that your neck has this pain shooting through it. Your kids start crying from the back seat because they see you wincing from the pain. *What do you do now?*

Dear Friends and Patients:

I know that most of us would be tempted to go on with our vacation regardless of some neck pain. We would try to minimize the pain and extent of the injury by taking a few aspirin and telling yourself "it'll get better with rest."

Do you think this would be the best approach? No way. In a moment you will learn the reasons why.

What no one has told you about whiplash...

Some people who are in an auto accident feel pain immediately. However most don't feel any sign of pain until 2 hours or even 2 weeks after the accident!

Why does this happen? Believe it or not, your muscles actually tighten up in an attempt to support your head during an impact – which results in a torn or damaged ligaments. And you don't feel the affects until after your body starts shooting off "*pain and warning signals*" that something is wrong.

These signals are "pain signals".

This whole process can take time. *That is where the danger comes into play.* While you think you are perfectly okay, you are moving about – only to find yourself in excruciating pain *just a few hours later.*

The First Line of Defense

The very *best* thing to do following an accident – even if you don't feel pain *right now* – is to call your family chiropractor.

Many people don't realize that whiplash affects other parts of your body, too.

Fact: As many as 70% of people who suffer

From whiplash *complain of headaches.*

Scientists believe headache pain occurs due to this muscle tightening action described above, as well as mild nerve damage. Some people experience migraines constantly following an accident. Others get daily or weekly headaches. Some get pain in the front of their forehead. Others experience a tortuous "all over" headache.

I would like you to think of a friend or family member who's experienced an auto accident in the past. Go through this list and see if they have experienced any of the following tell-tale symptoms of whiplash. (Check off those that apply.)

Basic Whiplash Symptoms

- 1. Neck pain and/or stiffness
- 2. Headache
- 3. Blurred vision
- 4. Irritability
- 5. Low back pain and/or stiffness
- 6. Shoulder pain
- 7. Difficulty swallowing
- 8. Nausea
- 9. Fatigue
- 10. Ringing in the ears
- 11. Dizziness
- 12. Vertigo
- 13. Numbness and tingling
- 14. Pain in the jaw or face
- 15. Pain between the shoulder blades
- 16. Pain in the arms or legs, feet and hands

Chances are good that you checked off two or more items. In fact, we treat many whiplash victims in our clinic and if there is one consistent trend we have noticed it is this:

Most people experience 3 or more symptoms following whiplash!

Important: If you or your acquaintance experienced an accident in the last 60-90 days, please direct them to call my office at (815) 372-0170. Tell them to mention your name and they will not be charged for their initial examination. *It is critically important that they act to get treatment ASAP.*

Or, if this describes you, call today and schedule a free examination so we can make sure you have not experienced injuries; even "unseen" or unfelt injuries that may be lurking around.

Why Whiplash Occurs

As you might guess, the #1 most common source of whiplash comes as a result of automobile accidents. Either your car has been...

- **1. Hit from behind**
- **2. From the side (a "diagonal slice")**
- **3. Or you collide head on with another vehicle**

What happens next is where all the pain and injury emanates from. Your head is suddenly jerked back and forth - beyond its normal limits.

Your muscles and ligaments are torn – like bending a Barbie doll in two different directions in a quick "sawing" motion. As you can imagine, many different injuries can occur during this ever-so-quick injury process. Things like:

- **Your discs between the vertebrae can tear or rupture. Your vertebrae can be forced out of its normal position/alignment.**
- **Your muscles pull and you experience soreness / spasms**
- **You accelerate degeneration, decay and arthritis of your spine**

What about the long-term affects of a whiplash injury?

The most important lesson I want my readers to learn from this months issue is... *just because you don't feel pain immediately following an accident, doesn't mean there is not injury!*

What happens if your whiplash goes untreated? I have treated patients that ignored the early warning signs... who are still experiencing pain *five years later.*

As you get older it's not uncommon to experience arthritis. Even *premature disc degeneration* which is a fancy way of saying you'll feel more back pain as you get older.

All this could be avoided.

Don't Wait.

Too many people think "If I don't have pain right away, I'm O.K.". Whiplash injuries can be so slight that at first you don't even know you are injured. *Studies prove that even drivers traveling at low speeds of 5 miles-per-hour can experience whiplash!*

The lesson: *Call your chiropractor as soon as possible* following any accident.

We make whiplash appointments a priority in our office. Your chiropractor should be the *second person you call* following an accident. The first should be to 911. Don't ever worry about getting in – we make such appointments an instant priority.

If you were first examined in a hospital – we still recommend seeing your chiropractor for a "second opinion." Emergency rooms are designed to treat *short-term, urgent based health care situations ie. Broken bones, tumors, fracture, lacerations etc* . Not subtle spinal injuries that would be caught by a trained chiropractor. We often find severe *soft tissue damage* that hospitals failed to diagnose! Or even worse just prescribe pain killers, anti-inflammatory medications, and muscle relaxants. I've seen this all too often. In fact when most people get their first adjustment they realize it's not as scary as they previously thought.

What about painkillers or surgery?

Chiropractors are different from other doctors. Traditional doctors are trained to rely on drugs and surgery as a first resort – not last.

Chiropractors (and a growing number of MD's) believe that the body is its own best healer. Natural methods and non-invasive treatments (treatments that do NOT involve cutting open the body!) produce better long term results.

Pain killers and aspirin are, at best, only a temporary "quick fix" that does not solve the root cause of your problem. This is true not just for whiplash victims. It applies to everyone reading this who feels back pain.

Surgery to the spine is one of the most dangerous and invasive of all surgeries. Often the patient who's had surgery to the spine forever experiences some form of back pain throughout his or her life. An increasing number of studies are proving that chiropractic provides a much safer and in some cases far more effective alternative.

It is because of these reasons (and many more) that a growing number of people are flocking to chiropractors all over the county – while more traditional medicine is experiencing a dramatic decline. We expect this trend to continue as people become more educated about their health and well-being. This trend is, of course, being led full steam ahead by the aging baby-boom population in our country.

The message: Our society is finally rejecting drugs and surgery as an immediate, first line of defense – and looking at it as a last resort evil. Only you can make that final judgment call.

How Does Chiropractic Treatment Help?

Getting adjusted by a chiropractor is one of the only **proven remedies** for whiplash. Like all health care there is no such thing as a "cure all." But study after study has proven its effectiveness.

When we see a new patient, the process begins with a complete educational explanation to the patient about why they currently feel pain and why they will get better. Sometimes the exam may include special flexion/extension x-rays.

Second: We begin **correcting the injury** through the use of **very gentle**, natural adjustments to the neck and/or back. The patient can almost feel the improvement within seconds of the procedure. This gentle "adjustment" to the neck and spine returns the muscles to their natural position. My care is so gentle that I even adjust babies who have just been born.

Do Children Experience Whiplash?

YES! We started this newsletter telling a story of a family leaving for vacation. Unfortunately, children are rarely checked for whiplash following an automobile accident. Children suffer from the same symptoms and are actually at a much greater risk for injury! Many times people think that if they feel fine following an accident, then their kids are okay too.

This is not always the case.

Because kids are shorter and may be too close to a dashboard or air bag they may incur a more severe injury. Another reason for the higher risk is improper fitting of shoulder harnesses, seatbelts and car seats.

What To Do If You Are Involved In A Car Accident.....

Here are some important steps to follow if you find yourself involved in an accident.

1. **Stop your car** if you are able to and turn off the engine. This will minimize the risk of fire.
2. **Call 911** for police and medical assistance.
3. **Call your chiropractor or hospital** and notify him or her you've just been involved in an accident and need to be seen immediately. Get medical attention as soon as possible. Shock and trauma can sometimes mask serious injuries. After treatment you receive at the scene and/or hospital call your chiropractor for a complete examination.
4. **Exchange information with the other driver(s)** no matter who is at fault. Exchange names, addresses and insurance information. Include time and place of accident; weather and road conditions, and other circumstances of the accident. Get driver's license information, vehicle make and model and license plate number of all involved vehicles.
5. **Get the names and phone numbers of any witnesses** and all passengers in the cars involved.
6. **Don't discuss the accident with anyone.** Talk only to your attorney, insurance company and doctor. Give only necessary details to the other drivers and police officers. Do not discuss anything with an attorney that is not representing you.
7. **Call your insurance company** and give them all the information you have.
8. **Contact our office for an evaluation of your spine. Ask to speak directly with Dr Hagemeyer. 630-679-0554.**