

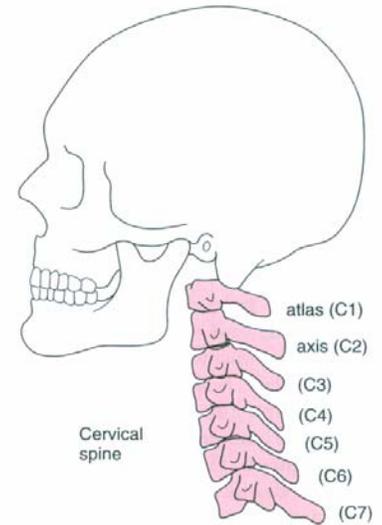
## CERVICAL (NECK) SPRAIN/STRAIN (WHIPLASH)

### ◆ What is it?

Whiplash is an injury to the neck caused when it is forcefully whipped or forced backward or forward. The structures involved are the muscles, ligaments, tendons, discs, and nerves in the neck.

### ◆ Signs and Symptoms of this Condition

- Pain or stiffness in the front and back of neck, either immediately following or up to 24 hours after the injury.
- Dizziness, headache, and nausea and vomiting.
- Muscle spasm with soreness and stiffness in the neck.
- Tenderness and swelling at the injury site.



### ◆ Causes

- Injury, usually from contact sports, motor vehicle accidents, pulling on the head when performing sit-ups, etc.

### ◆ What Can I do to prevent Cervical Sprain/Strain?

- Use proper technique (don't pull on head when performing sit-ups, avoid tackling with the head, spearing, and head-butting in football; use proper falling techniques to avoid landing on the head in other sports).
- Maintain appropriate conditioning, including neck strength and flexibility, as well as cardiovascular fitness.
- Appropriately warm up and stretch before practice or competition.
- Wear protective equipment, such as padded soft collars, for participation in contact sports.
- Defensive driving to avoid motor vehicle accidents.

### ◆ Prognosis

- Usually curable in 1 week to 3 months, based on the severity of injury, with appropriate treatment. In severe whiplash, it is not unusual to experience neck pain for several months.

## ◆ Treatment

- Rest, Ice, and medications (anti-inflammatory medication such as aspirin, ibuprofen, etc and/or muscle relaxants prescribed by your physician if indicated) to relieve pain.
- After 48-72 hours you may change to using heat (hot shower on the neck, hot pack, etc.).
- In severe, acute cases a cervical collar (neck brace) may be indicated for short duration use (a few days). Caution should be exercised in application of cervical collars as prolonged use and reliance on the brace can lead to muscle atrophy/weakness, which further delays recovery.
- Postural exercises (chin tucking to straighten the neck, scapular retraction pinching your shoulder blades together, each of these 10-15 repetitions per hour). **See Below**
- Active range of motion exercises (neck rotation side to side as if to look behind you working in a painfree range, shoulder circles similar to shrugging the shoulders but rolling them in circles forward and backward rather than moving the shoulders straight up and down, each of these 10-15 repetitions per hour). **See Below**
- NOTE: If you are experiencing pain down your arm(s) you should see your physician.

