

Neck Injury

Emergency Department

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water and dry thoroughly. Use hand gel, if provided, in care facilities.
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting stay at home and do not visit relatives that are vulnerable in hospital or in residential care. You will spread the illness.
- Keep the environment clean and safe. Let's work together to keep it that way. Prevention is better than cure.

Advice after a neck injury

Neck strain is caused by a sudden movement or a jolt to the body or head. This movement causes damage to ligaments, tendons and muscles in the neck.

It causes pain, stiffness and loss of movement in the neck.

Other symptoms may include:

- Headache
- Muscle spasm
- Pain in shoulders or arms

Neck strain is common after motor vehicle accidents, but can also be as a result of a blow to the head or through long term repetitive damage to the neck.

Symptoms of neck strain often don't appear when the injury is caused. It may take 6 - 12 hours for any symptoms to show and they may continue to get worse in the following days after the injury.

An X-ray is not required to diagnose neck strain but may be needed if there is a suspicion that the bones of your neck are damaged.

Treatment of Neck Strain:

- Reduce swelling by applying an ice-pack to the area (a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel will do). Do not apply ice directly onto skin. Apply the ice-pack for about 10 minutes.
- Take the regular painkillers to relieve discomfort such as paracetamol and ibuprofen.
- Carry out the following advice on correct sleeping posture to prevent pain and stiffness becoming worse.

Correct sleeping posture to avoid neck pain

Instructions for the patient:

- Always sleep on a firm bed, either on your back or on your side. Do not sleep face down.
- If you sleep on your side there are 2 points that are important:
- Ensure that the head and neck are straight i.e. in line with the rest of the spine (see over as in Fig. 1 and never as Fig. 2). The number of pillows may be 1 or 2 or more, depending on their thickness and firmness, but just keep the right number to keep the head straight.
- The arm on which you are lying must be kept in front of the chest, not under it or behind (see over as in Fig. 3).
- Help relieve discomfort by placing a rolled-up towel behind the back of the neck at night when lying flat.
- If symptoms have not improved after one week, please see your GP.



Fig. 1 **RIGHT** Head straight in line with back. Firm bed



Fig. 2 **WRONG** Head pushed up, pillow too thick



Fig. 3 **RIGHT** Arm in right position, underneath arm in front of chest



Fig. 4 **WRONG** Head dropped, pillow too thin

Symptoms of neck strain will usually begin to improve after a few days and in approximately 60% of cases, symptoms disappear completely after 4 weeks. Sometimes however, it takes a few months for symptoms to ease and some people may be left with a degree of stiffness and pain sometime after the injury occurred. If you have any concerns, contact your GP.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。