

# Neck Sprains

An information guide





## Neck Sprains

This leaflet contains discharge advice following your attendance to the Accident & Emergency Department (A&E) or Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC).

Sprains are painful because the muscles and ligaments have been injured. This pain often comes on a few hours after the injury occurred. It usually gets worse over the first 1 – 2 days and then gradually gets better over a few days or weeks. X-rays are often unnecessary.

You may experience a mild headache, muscle pains in the arms and back, jaw clicking and dizziness. These symptoms come on for many reasons related to muscle tension (none of them serious) and will get better. The best treatment is to correct your posture and get rid of the neck pain following the advice outlined below.

You are strongly encouraged to move your neck and return to your normal activities as soon as possible. Neck exercises should be gentle and slow, especially during the first few days.

They will probably cause some pain due to the process of healing. However, pain should not be excessive and neck movements should not cause other symptoms, e.g. pins and needles, numbness or weakness in your arms or hands. If any of these occur please contact/return to the A&E Department/ UTC you attended or contact your GP.

## **DO**

- Turn your head slowly to either side to look over your shoulders
- Slowly take your left ear down towards your left shoulder, and repeat on the other side.
- Move your chin towards your chest, i.e. face downwards, and then raise your face up towards the ceiling
- Sitting down, gently lift one arm up above your head, and then gently lower it. Repeat with the other arm

**Repeat each exercise 5 – 10 times. Do these 6 times a day.**

## **DO NOT**

- Continue these exercises if they cause dizziness
- Circle your head and neck
- Slouch

## **Pain relief can be provided in two ways**

Simple pain relief tablets such as paracetamol or co-codamol and/or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory tablets such as ibuprofen. All these medicines are available without prescription. It is cheaper to buy them without prescription.

People with asthma, peptic ulcers or kidney diseases should not take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines.

You may have been expecting to be issued with a neck collar. Recent research has shown that these are of no benefit in traumatic neck sprain and may prolong the time it takes for your injury to get better

If you are not getting better in a week and we have not arranged to see you again, please arrange an appointment with your GP

## **Correct sitting position**

- Sit in a firm chair
- Support the natural hollow in the lower part of your back with a small firm cushion or rolled-up towel
- Keep your shoulders back

## **Correct sleeping position to help neck pain**

Always sleep on a firm bed either on your back or on your side, never sleep on your face. If you sleep on your side there are two points that are important:

- Your head should remain in line with your spine. Use a rolled-up towel placed inside your pillowcase to form a ridge to support your neck
- The arm on which you are lying must be kept in front of your chest, not under it or behind it

**A&E Department:**

**Fairfield General Hospital– 0161 778 2600**

**Notes:**



**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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**For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897**


**For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service**

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