

CHIROPRACTIC APPROACH TO PERSONAL INJURY

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Motor vehicle accidents, regardless of the cause or circumstances, are unfortunately a common cause of personal injury. Their effects on your health, as well as on the lifestyle and well being of your family can be both immediate and long term.

As the central supportive structure of the body and the bony house of the spinal cord, the spine often suffers a traumatic blow in an automotive type injury.

The spine consists of 24 movable vertebral bodies and the discs in between them. The spine sits on the pelvis, consisting of the sacrum, coccyx and the hips. Vertebral bodies can be thought of as blocks of bones, whose chief function is to bear weight and provide a strong protective covering over the spinal cord, which together with the brain forms the central part of the nervous system. These intervertebral discs can be thought of as shock absorbers, but they also function to allow the spinal segments to move. The spine is supported by various different groups of ligaments and tendons, and powered by muscles which attach to it in the neck, mid and lower back.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR BODY DURING A MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT?



Your head, neck, mid and lower back, supportive muscles and limbs may be violently thrown forward, then backward, or from

side to side. This complete movement will take place in an instant, with your body parts first accelerating to about the speed of the car, then rapidly changing direction returning to their original positions, and coming to rest very suddenly. Consider the tremendous amount of force that is applied to the bones, joints, soft muscle tissue and supportive ligaments and tendons, as they attempt to retain the normal position of the spine during this violent and rapid event. This force may result in painful damage to these structures, in the form of misaligned vertebrae, muscle spasms, joint swelling, injury to the intervertebral disc, supportive ligaments, and resultant irritation to the spinal nerves.

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EVALUATION AND TREATMENT

On your first visit to the chiropractor, you will be asked to complete a simple Patient Health History form as well as a brief description of the accident. This will provide your doctor with some of the necessary information to begin evaluating your health problems.

The doctor will then review your Patient Health History with you, and take a complete history of your specific health complaints. This will ensure that any changes in your health, such as neck and back pain, headaches, problems with vision, memory or sleep, that may be related to the accident do not go undetected.

Next, your doctor will begin your health examination. This usually begins with your height, weight and blood pressure. Your doctor will also check your ability to stand, walk, move your spine, arms and legs. Various different in office, orthopedic and neurological tests will be performed, including reflexes and tests of muscular strength. Initial examination is performed using gentle, non stressful techniques, keeping in mind that the spine and supportive tissues are frequently very inflamed and painful after an accident.

Spinal X-rays and other tests, and consultations with other health care specialists may be ordered, if suggested by the findings of your history and examination.

When all the information is gathered, your doctor will review the material with you and your family, and explain the meaning of the examination and tests results. He will explain to you if your condition is likely to benefit from chiropractic care.