



AdvaCare Clinics: Auto Accident Injury Rehabilitation with Physical Therapy

Every day, many people are adversely affected by automobile accidents, resulting in about 500,000 hospitalizations and four million emergency room visits annually. These unforeseen tragedies often result in painful injuries that make it difficult to perform daily tasks and activities.

Some people may think their injuries are not that severe after an automobile accident because there is little or no vehicle damage. Don't be misled by minimal damage to your car. When a vehicle shows no damage, it DOES NOT mean there have been no injuries.

Whiplash neck and back injuries can happen even after a fender bender or broken tail light and may not become apparent until months or even years after the incident has actually occurred.

Unfortunately, many car accident victims face potentially life-long medical conditions as a result of their injuries because they did not seek medical attention immediately following an accident. You should seek medical attention after a car accident even if you think you have escaped unharmed. Even minor car accidents can result in devastating injuries that result in overwhelming medical bills and time lost from work.

We effectively treat the following injuries:

- **Back Injury:** In a car accident, your low back (lumbar spine) or mid back (thoracic spine) can be injured. Additional back injuries like disc herniations can also occur in a car accident, which can cause spinal cord compression.
- **Neck Injury & Whiplash:** Whiplash can cause impingement, stretching, or irritation of the nerves and the spinal cord, as well as other symptoms of neck pain.
- **Knee & Hip Injury:** Knees can get forced into the dashboard or back of the seat causing knee pain. If the force is great enough, then this can also cause hip pain and result in lack of mobility.
- **Shoulder & Arm Injury:** Shoulder pain and injury are surprisingly common with car accidents, and there are many ways in which you can injure your shoulder. The type of pain in your shoulder can vary depending on the type of injury, from dull and achy pain to sharp or burning pain. In some patients, the pain is felt in the shoulder, but in many the pain is referred to the mid-back region, making diagnosis difficult.

- Face Injuries – In a car accident, injuries to the face can be caused by almost anything — including a steering wheel, dashboard, airbag, windshield, side window, car seats or shattered glass. These injuries range in severity from scrapes and bruises, to laceration and fractures, even temporomandibular disorders of the jaw (TMJ) and serious dental injuries.
- Head Injuries: One of the worst injuries that can happen in an auto accident is traumatic brain injuries. An injury of this type is classified as a catastrophic injury. They can have lifelong impacts on the injured victim or even result in death. Brain injuries may lead to temporary and permanent impairment of the brain functions. Skull fractures, swelling of the brain and nerve damage can all be a part of head injuries.
 - The traumatic brain injury (TBI) patient is one of the most challenging that a physical therapist may encounter. Because of the multiple body systems affected by a brain injury and the strong likelihood of secondary impairments, a physical therapist will use a wide variety of examination procedures and intervention techniques.
- Muscle Injury: Injury to the muscles, tendons, and ligaments are extremely common in auto accidents. Sprains and strains are referred to as soft tissue injuries (soft tissue includes muscles, tendons, and ligaments). The muscles play an interesting role in the neck and especially in whiplash injury. The neck muscles are responsible for keeping the head up and maintaining posture. The muscles of the neck can be exposed to dramatic stretch forces during an auto collision, as we can see in the movie to the right. As the torso is moved forward during the crash, the head rotates backward, stretching the large muscles in the front of the neck. Immediately after a crash, many patients will complain of neck muscle pain, and this is often from this stretching motion. Unfortunately, scar tissue can develop in these muscles leading to other problems.

Physical therapy is an efficient way to facilitate speedy recovery from auto accidents.

- Flexibility and Strengthening Exercise Programs – Our physical therapists are proficient in guiding you through a variety of exercises and techniques to strengthen muscles and assist your body's natural healing.
- Manual Therapy – In addition to relaxing muscles and joints, manual therapy can reduce pain and inflammation, while vastly improving your mobility and flexibility.

If you have been in an auto accident, it is important to start treatment early. We encourage you to set up an appointment with a doctor. The longer you wait to seek the expertise of one of our licensed physical therapists, the more prolonged the recovery process is likely to be.

If you or someone you know has been injured in a car accident, the best thing you can do is to have them call our office today. Contact AdvaCare Clinics at 952-835-6653.