Have you ever seen the crash test videos of an auto accident? It is really quite remarkable how the human body gets whipped around and contorted in just a fraction of a second. Before I started to treat patients injured in auto accidents, I thought most people were faking their injuries. Or at least exaggerating them. But after 20 years of working with people injured in car wrecks, I know that their injuries can last a lifetime. Recently there have been a series of scientific studies that have demonstrated just how long lasting and far reaching whiplash injuries can be. The bad news is that one in two people who sustained whiplash injury, still report pain up to 17 years after the accident! 1 Another study showed that 88% of auto accident patients had significant pain at two year follow-up. 2 Whiplash patients had a 300% greater chance on future neck and shoulder pain compared to people who have never experienced a whiplash. 3 Those patients who had a whiplash injury were 160 to 370% more at risk for headache, thoracic and low back pain, as well as for fatigue, sleep disturbances and ill health. 4 It is amazing that a neck injury can effect your overall health, but that is what the research has demonstrated. 4

What all this means is that whiplash is a serious injury, that can cause lifelong problems and even make you susceptible to illness.

If you or someone you care about has been in a auto accident, get checked out before the injuries become permanent! Dr. Kukurin

Dr. Kukurin treats a whiplash patient
When the spine is whipped forward (hyper) elongates the muscles causing tears and bleeding into the muscles of the neck, shoulders and upper back. These tears if not properly treated will form painul scar tissue. It is this abnormal tissue that can lead to lifelong pain and discomfort (see page one). Also when the spine is whipped the ligaments become stretched, this is like overt-stretching a spring. When the ligaments are over stretched the normal shape of the spine is lost and the spine has little or no ability to “snap back” towards normal. The radiographs at the right are a patient of mine who sustained a whiplash type injury. The ligaments that hold the normal curve in the neck are sprung, the curve is reduced from its normal 30 degrees to a mere 9 degrees. If left uncorrected this patient would likely develop arthritis in her neck and long term problems. After intensive spinal correction in our office the curve was improved to 20 degrees.

Chiropractor’s have always believed that abnormal alignment causes increased mechanical stress on the spine. This increased stress, we thought, led to arthritis. Well recently a series of scientific studies have confirmed our suspicions. Abnormal alignment does indeed lead to accelerated degeneration/arthritis.

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What if you are one of the unfortunate patients who had a whiplash years ago and are still suffering? Well there is some good news. Studies have found that even in patients with chronic residual pain from whiplash, acupuncture provides relief. 5-7 When combined with newer methods of chiropractic spinal correction and physiotherapy, acupuncture can be an important addition to the treatment of chronic post-whiplash pain. If you have received our eNewsletter on acupuncture, you should know that acupuncture is used to turn off the nerves that carry pain. So if you or someone you know was injured in an auto accident, don’t wait and don’t assume the pain will go away on its own. Statistics show that even with treatment many patients have life long problems.

Do everything you can to avoid being a statistic. Set up an appointment today and aggressively treat your whiplash injury. Dr. K

References used in this newsletter


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