

What is it?

Whiplash, or whiplash associated disorder occurs with a sudden acceleration-deceleration movement, causing the head and neck to whip forward and or backwards. This commonly occurs in motor vehicle accidents but can occur in sports and with falls.

Generally, whiplash injuries do not result in significant structural damage to one anatomical structure but lead to widespread low to moderate level injury to a range of tissue in the area.

Symptoms can include pain, stiffness, headaches, muscle spasm, and reduced strength. These symptoms can occur whether a structural pathology or lesion is present. These symptoms may appear immediately after a suspected injury or can take a prolonged period to appear. The symptoms may appear individual or as a cluster and can vary from person to person.



Book Now

Diagnosis

Whiplash associated disorder injuries are diagnosed through the mechanism of injury and symptoms that you are presenting with. Imaging is generally not required however, it may be used to rule in/out any other pathology if it is questioned or suspected.

A healthcare professional will perform a detailed subjective assessment to determine the mechanism, movement, pattern, and type of pain that you are complaining of. The physical examination will assess range of movement, muscle strength, joint and ligament stability. Palpation of the upper neck, back and shoulder, and reflex testing will also occur.



Management

Management of a whiplash associated disorder is a multimodal approach and often includes:

- Education around the injury, management, time frame, return to function and sport (if applicable).
- Manual therapy to restore mechanics of the neck.
- Strengthening of the neck, upper back, and shoulder musculature.
- Pain management strategies – this may include medication provided by a doctor.

- Use of heat or cold therapy.
- Use of stretching and mobility exercises.
- If required, and due to the mechanism of injury, a consultation with a psychologist may be beneficial to remove fear of trigger factors.



Book Now

If you think you have suffered whiplash or another neck injury, book now with one of our experienced physiotherapists to create a plan to get you back In Balance and doing the things you love!