

## What is Whiplash?

Whiplash is a **neck injury caused by sudden movement** of the head. This occurs when the neck is subjected to acceleration and deceleration forces, causing the spine to be jolted backwards and forwards, which results in strain or sprain to the soft tissues.

Whiplash is a non-medical term and is most often associated with **road traffic accidents**, but can occur in other situations where the body is jolted unexpectedly.

*For full reference and further information please see [NICE Guidelines \(2018\)](#).*



## What can this look like?

Common symptoms can include **neck pain, stiffness, restricted movement, and headaches**.

Other less common symptoms may include: muscular spasms, deafness, tinnitus, difficulty swallowing (dysphagia), nausea, fatigue, dizziness, pins and needles (paraesthesia), memory loss and joint pain.

The impact of whiplash may result in bony or soft-tissue injuries, which can lead to a variety of clinical manifestations called **Whiplash-Associated Disorders (WAD)**.

*For full reference and further information please see [NICE Guidelines \(2018\)](#).*



## What treatment can be expected?

There is **no single treatment** for whiplash that is widely accepted amongst medical professionals and may depend on the grade of the injury.

Like other strain injuries, it is not unusual for the pain to last for a few months. It can take several hours for symptoms to appear, but will usually get better on its own within 2 to 3 months (NHS, 2019).

**Management of whiplash injury may include** (see [NICE Guidelines, 2018](#)):

- Self-care information and providing reassurance that symptoms are self-limiting.
- Encouraging early return to usual activities and early mobilisation, and discouraging the use of soft collars.
- Considering referral to physiotherapy treatment or onward referral for diagnostics and/or orthopaedic review if symptoms persist.



## Let's take a closer look...

### What happened?

The injured parties (a 43-year-old woman and her 22-year-old daughter) sustained whiplash injuries following a ferry crash into a wall, whilst sat in their stationary car on board. The crash caused them to jolt forward suddenly leaving them reporting whiplash-related, symptoms, such as persistent neck pain, stiffness, headaches, and difficulty completing functional tasks.

“Remote treatment has many benefits. Improved access to treatment, more convenience, lower cost and reduction in CO2 emissions”.

### Outcome

There is strong clinical evidence that remote treatment is just as effective as face-to-face treatment when facilitated in the appropriate cases and can demonstrate significant savings. Following the rehabilitation interventions, both claimants achieved a full recovery from remote treatment and returned to their full duties at work and pre-injury functioning within the home, 6 weeks after the referral.

Additionally, early data gleaned from QBE's remote treatment service demonstrates that carbon emissions are reduced significantly due to the reduction in miles driven by parties to access face-to-face treatment. Claimants typically travel around 50 miles for 5 face-to-face appointments each. Our data shows that 66% of claimants within the service accessed remote treatment, resulting in a 78% reduction in carbon emissions. These benefits are anticipated to increase on further uptake of remote services.

### Rehabilitation

It was reported that both injured parties worked in cafés and despite returning to work immediately after the incident, they were struggling with certain aspects of their duties. Following a referral by a QBE British Marine Claims Handler to the Rehabilitation Team, a telephonic triage assessment was completed for both injured parties and a course of remote physiotherapy treatment was arranged.

**Please note: "Medical treatment, including diagnostics and equipment (if relevant to treatment), is VAT exempt. Medical legal reports are VAT applicable as this is not regarded as treatment. Registered psychologists and psychiatrists are able to offer VAT exempt services, but not counsellors or psychotherapists (HMRC, 2021)."**

**References:**

NHS. (2019). Whiplash. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/whiplash/>

NICE. (2018). Neck pain - whiplash injury. <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/neck-pain-whiplash-injury/#!scenario>