Neck Injury Advice

Neck pain can happen during or after everyday activities such as jolting the neck when you trip or fall, playing sport or being involved in a road traffic accident. It may take several hours after the injury for symptoms like pain to develop. Pain or stiffness will often develop in the neck and/or shoulders and/or mid back. It may get worse over the first day or so but will gradually get better, even though this may take some time. The pain and stiffness should start to wear off in about 4-5 days.

Things you should do:	Things you shouldn't do:
• Apply a heat pack to your neck for 15 - 20 minutes every 2 hours if you can. • Always wrap a hot water bottle in a towel and never put it directly onto your skin. • Take the recommended medication to relieve the pain • If you find heat doesn't work then you can try an ice pack instead - again wrap it in a towel first.	• Use heat/ice packs over areas of skin that are in poor condition • Drive if your neck movements are limited • Do not wear a neck collar – it's better to keep your neck moving (unless a clinician tells you not to)

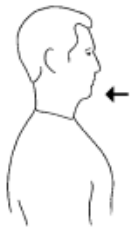
Exercises

Begin these flexibility exercises as soon as you can - provided they don't cause excessive pain – as they are designed to mobilise the joints, strengthen your muscles and so improve the range of movement and function of your neck. The repetitions and sets are a guideline. You will not cause damage to your neck by moving it.

1.Turn your head round to look over your right shoulder until you feel a comfortable stretch, then back to the middle. Repeat x10 and then change sides.



2.In sitting, pull your chin inward making a double chin x10



3. Roll shoulders and keep arms relaxed by your side x10



4. Sit on a chair with your arms over your chest. Gently turn your body to the right and then to the left x10



5. In sitting gently bend head down towards your chest and then look up to the ceiling x10





Sleeping on your side or on your back provides a better position for your neck. You may need to sleep in a different position to normal and use pillows to support a comfortable position.
Keeping up your normal activities and staying active are important factors in getting better more quickly.

When to seek further help
It is important that you contact your GP or attend the Emergency Department at the Grange university hospital (not Minor injury unit), if you develop the following problems:

- If the pain becomes worse despite taking regular pain relief.
- If other symptoms develop such as loss of feeling (numbness), weakness, or persistent pins and needles in part of an arm or hand or legs. These may indicate irritation to or pressure on a nerve emerging from the spinal cord.

Pain relief

Good control of your pain will speed up your recovery. Painkillers, such as Paracetamol, are useful to ease pain, it's best to take them regularly for a few days rather than every now and then. You can buy it over the counter from a pharmacy or local shops. Make sure you don't take any other product containing Paracetamol. Anti-inflammatory such as Ibuprofen can also help and can be taken with Paracetamol.
However, if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant you shouldn't use ibuprofen. Side effects sometimes occur with anti-inflammatory painkillers - stomach pain and bleeding from the stomach, are the most serious. Some people with asthma, high blood pressure, kidney failure or heart failure may not be able to take them either. If you have been advised not to take Ibuprofen in the past or are on any blood thinning tablets then avoid Ibuprofen. With all the medications, it is essential that you follow the instructions on the packet or bottle carefully.

If you are concerned about your progress and not improved within 10 days, we advise you to see your GP or attend the Emergency Department at the Grange University Hospital and not the Minor injury unit.

For further help regaining mobility and function please follow the link to self-refer to Physiotherapy:
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Physiotherapy Service (wales.nhs.uk)

If you are unable to do this electronically you should call 0300 3732539 between 8.30am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday.

References:
Neck pain - NHS
Neck pain - whiplash injury | Health topics A to Z | CKS | NICE
Torticollis (Wry Neck): Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment

If you are at all concerned about your injury, please contact the relevant Emergency Department: Grange University Hospital: 01633 493287
Or Minor Injury Unit (MIU):
Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056
Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073
Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU 01443 802353
Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318

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