

What You Must Know About Car Accidents

Car accidents on almost every occasion provide miserable experiences for both parties involved. Individuals are left wondering where to go for help. Some reluctantly go to the hospital expecting answers and symptomatic relief, but in most cases the individual leaves in just as much pain and confusion as when they went in. These individuals leave with pain killers, muscle relaxants, and maybe a soft brace as they prepare for an unknown future.

Many individuals look at the situation and decide to skip care all together because they have mild symptoms or they are afraid of who will cover their costs if they do go to a health professional.

“Confused” is often the adjective used by most patients in our office when describing the aftermath of a car accident.

This paper is to provide you with only a few details about motor vehicle accidents.

Following a car accident make sure to:

- Get out of harm’s way and call for help
- Write down the opposite parties’ license plate number
- Exchange information (name, telephone number, license identification number, and insurance information).
- Document crossroads/highways, speeds, and events that happened before/during/after an accident. Take a picture if needed.
- Call your insurance agent and give all the information that you collected from the accident.

If you need help, make sure you get it (this is why you pay for auto-insurance/medical insurance).

Following a car accident the opposite party’s insurance carrier uses scare tactics to persuade individuals from getting help. Often stating:

- “the accident was not that serious”
- “ it was really your fault so lets drop the whole thing
- “ we will give you this sum of money because that is all this case is really worth”
- “you are not really hurt”

There are so many things that they will say or do to scare you into doing nothing after a car accident.

When talking to the opposite parties insurance company, you can give them the necessary information needed, or you can wait. Often a lawyer might be used to communicate on your behalf no matter how mild the accident. Most lawyers will only be paid if you receive a settlement. A lot of individuals get scared when the term lawyer is used and think of courthouses, stacks of paperwork, or spending long hours rehearsing your statement. This is far from the truth. A very small percentage of car accidents end up making to court (most the time when someone is disabled for life or needing extensive care for injuries). Attorney's make sure that you are compensated for healthcare, auto restoration, future issues, lost work and much more. Individuals seem to relax more when they have a lawyer taking care of everything for them. In our office we can point you to the right lawyer because 75% of our car accident patient's use a lawyer.

In our office we accept three forms of payment for personal injury cases.

1. Patient pay up front for all care needed. This can be expensive but about 2-5% patients do this.
2. Patient's sign a lien with their attorney. This is legal document that acts as a promise to pay the doctor when a settlement is reached. 75% of patients use this.
3. Patient's have med-pay on their insurance policy which enables health professionals to be paid right a way. Med-pay is a great asset that many individuals don't know they have. 20 % of patients use this.

Do not base your health upon the severity of the car accident, damage to the car, or how fast you were going.

<p><u>Vehicle Size and Speed Quote</u> <i>"Acceleration depends on the force applied and the inertia of the vehicle that has been struck. The force is dependent upon the weight and speed of the striking vehicle, so that a <i>streetcar traveling as 3 mph can apply as much force and initiate the same degree of acceleration as a compact car traveling at 40 mph.</i>"</i></p>	<p><u>Vehicle Damage v. Passenger Injury</u> <i>"The amount of damage sustained by the car bears little relationship to the force applies. To take an extreme example: If the car was struck in concrete, the damage sustained might be very great but the occupants would not be injured because the car could not move forward, whereas, on inc, the damage to the car could be slight but the injuries sustained might be severe because of the rapid accelerations permitted."</i></p>
--	---

Ian Macnab University of Toronto -Chief of Division of Orthopedic Surgery, Wellesley Hospital, Toronto.

AMAZING FACTS ABOUT CAR ACCIDENTS

- A **low-velocity collision can cause soft-tissue damage** in the posterior neck, which may lead to chronic whiplash symptoms.
- **“A variety of factors**, including the occupant's awareness or head position in a colliding vehicle, **defines the risk of neck injury to passengers in colliding vehicles**. One can only conclude that the threshold of injury is a complex dynamic relying on velocity, force, head position, head-torso angles, restraint placement, anticipation, tissue elasticity, tissue strength, and any multitude of variables that evade accurate determination.”
- **“Follow-up roentgenograms (x-rays) taken an average of 7 years after injury** in one series of patients without prior roentgenographic (x-rays) evidence of disc disease **indicated that 39% had developed degenerative disc disease at one or more disc levels since injury.**”
- **“Whiplash injury results in chronic neck pain and headache in about 20% of subjects.”**
- A study of 22 traffic accident victims found 245 bone, diskoligamentous, and soft tissue lesions of the cervical spine that were not detected on radiographs.
- **43% of those injured in whiplash will experience long-term symptoms.**
- In one journal article chiropractic improved the symptom category of 93% chronic whiplash patients. This is particularly important considering that 96% of these patients had intrusive symptoms that handicapped their work and leisure activities and required frequent use of pain drugs, or they were severely disabled, having lost jobs and required continued medical interventions with constant use of pain drugs.

The saying often goes “if it is not broken don't fix it.” There are two errors in logic seen in people that have experienced a motor vehicle accident.

First, they wait until their in pain before they seek help. This can be costly because issues might take longer to heal, because the injury heals with excessive scar tissue. Often times patients don't correlate their current complaints to an accident they had months before. If they do then insurance companies will push their will on the individuals, stating that the individual injuries occurred after their accident stating if you were really hurt you would have done something about it months ago.

Second, patients will base care upon symptoms (either not starting care or ending prematurely).

Car accidents cause biomechanical issues (diminished mobility/restrictions). The latest scientific research shows that hypomobility/restrictions lead to nervous system, connective tissue, vascular, and physiological changes. These changes can be symptomatic (painful) or asymptomatic (with no pain).

Chiropractors provide a solution to these biomechanical issues where traditional medicine such as anti-inflammatories/ muscle relaxants will not. Increasing mobility by providing mobilization to the spine and surrounding soft tissue will help break up scar tissue, decrease muscle spasm, and decrease pain fibers from firing, and help you obtain better health.