

Unfortunately, car accidents are a normal phenomenon in our society. Even worse, most people who are involved in them are injured. The injuries are typically to the ligaments that connect the bones in the spine. Injuries occur because the body goes from traveling at the speed of the car to zero in less than a second. The forces involved in such a rapid deceleration are beyond what the body was designed to withstand.

Many doctors believe that as long as there is no significant bleeding or broken bones, the injuries from car accidents will heal normally without any assistance. Unfortunately, research shows that this isn't true. Only twelve percent of car accident victims recover completely. The other 88% continued to suffer for many years. 40% of injured individuals continued to suffer, even ten years later, to the point that they needed ongoing treatment.

The most common complaint was neck pain, suffered by 74%. Numbness was experienced by 45%. Low back pain affected 42%. Frequent headaches were experienced by 33%. Many believe that if they feel fine after an accident, they were not injured. The fact is that over a third of those injured in a car accident will develop delayed symptoms. As would be expected, older patients had a worse prognosis.

Scar tissue is often the reason for ongoing pain after an accident. Scar tissue is the body's bandaid. Normal skin, ligament and muscle tissue takes weeks to repair properly. The body can create scar tissue within a day or two. It is supposed to hold things together until the normal tissue can be built. Ideally the scar tissue would then gradually dissolve away. Unfortunately it never goes away completely and in some cases where the conditions are not ideal to promote healing, a lot of scar tissue remains.

The problem with scar tissue is that it doesn't function like normal tissue. It is not very elastic and it can bind layers of tissues together that are supposed to slide over each other. This can lead to ongoing pain and limited motion. The primary action to prevent this from happening and to reduce the amount of residual scar tissue is motion.

Years ago, when someone was injured in a car accident, they were put in a collar to reduce the motion of the neck. This felt better initially, but it often led to long term problems, because the lack of motion promoted more scar tissue formation. Now, patients are rarely put in cervical collars. Provided the injury is not severe and there are no broken bones, movement during the healing process helps promote better healing. Even still, some scar tissue accumulates and causes longer term problems.

This is the advantage of chiropractic. Chiropractic adjustments help to induce a greater amount of motion to the joints and therefore reduce the scar tissue formation and promote more complete healing.

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