

# WHIPLASH



A whiplash typically occurs to the occupant of a vehicle that is rear-ended, but can also result from a fall or a sports injury. Although many "victims" have no symptoms in a matter of weeks or months, 20 to 40 percent have symptoms that can be debilitating and persist for years to a lifetime. The most common symptoms are neck and upper back pain and headaches, but many patients experience numerous others such as dizziness, vertigo, problems concentrating, nausea, jaw pain, visual disturbances, numbness and tingling in the arms or hands, rib cage and chest pain, etc.

Contrary to popular belief, the speed at impact and the damage to the vehicle has very little to do with the extent of injury to the patient. Research shows that low impact collisions, with no skid marks and/or vehicle damage can produce significant injury. Other factors, such as the position of the head at impact, and the awareness of the impending accident by the occupant, are much better predictors of injury and chronicity.

Studies on chiropractic and whiplash showed that chiropractic is quite effective in providing relief to whiplash sufferers. A study published in the *medical journal Injury*, in 1996 showed significant improvement in 93% of chronic whiplash patients following chiropractic care. The *Journal of Orthopedic Medicine* published another study which included a group of patients with all kinds of bizarre pain distributions and symptoms ranging from moderate to severe. Overall 72% of these patients got better.

The medical literature has also suggested that disc injuries or herniations are not uncommon after a whiplash injury. Studies published in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physical Therapeutics* have shown that not only these patients improved clinically after chiropractic adjustments, but repeat MRI imaging demonstrated decreased size or resolution of the disc herniation in many cases!

Many patients are hesitant to receive chiropractic care soon after an injury because they are in pain. From our experience, we find that the sooner you seek chiropractic care the better. We have had many patients coming to the office immediately after an accident, and these are usually the ones who get the best and fastest results. If you have been injured months or even years ago do not despair, the above studies show that chiropractic can help you as well.

If you have been in an accident, do not suffer pointlessly, give us a call!

*Dr. Liana Harper and Dr. Pierre Gaulin are in private practice in Coaldale, and are the proud parents of two healthy children. They can be reached at*

**Harper Chiropractic Health Centre at 345-2266**

*or their website at*

**[www.harperchiro.ca](http://www.harperchiro.ca)**

*Disclaimer: The above represents the opinion of the authors, based on extensive research and years of clinical practice. It is not intended for self-diagnosis and treatment. Please consult a health care professional as your specific condition might require different recommendations.*