



## **Motor Vehicle Collisions**

Motor vehicle collisions (MVC's) are an all-too-common cause of injury. Because there are countless types of collisions (rear-enders, side impact etc.), the injuries that will result from an MVC are impossible to predict. The most common types of injuries which result from MVC's are whiplash injuries to the back and neck. Damage to the ligaments, muscles, joints or even arteries in the area may result. Symptoms do not always start immediately after an accident. Without proper management initial injuries can progress into persistent long-term complaints.

Treatment initially focuses on decreasing the inflammation and pain in the injured area(s), using modalities such as acupuncture, ice, and interferential electrical current. Range-of-motion exercises will be prescribed early on to prevent muscles and joints from stiffening up. As your treatment progresses strengthening and stabilizing exercises will be added. A 6-8 week time period is reasonable for significant recovery to take place.

The therapeutic modalities commonly used include:

**Ultrasound:** uses sound waves and may be used to decrease scar tissue, increase blood flow, or decrease pain.

**Interferential Current:** uses electrical current to decrease pain, can also be used to elicit muscle contraction and decrease swelling.

**Acupuncture:** uses small, solid needles to encourage healing, reduce pain, and improve function of affected areas of the body.

What can you do at home?

**Rest:** by decreasing your activity you allow your body a chance to heal itself. When you start to feel better it is important to ease back into activities which might be aggravating. Listen to your body - pain means that you have done too much.

**Ice:** ice decreases the metabolism of your cells so that they do not die despite a decrease in oxygen to the injured area. Ice should be kept on for approximately 15 minutes, several times a day. The injured area should be elevated (above the level of your heart) at the same time. Use a wet towel between the ice and your skin to protect against frostbite. You can use frozen veggies, cold packs, or real ice.