



Accurate Clinic

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Neck and Back Strain

1. You have been diagnosed with a strain of the neck and or back, also called a cervical or lumbar strain.
2. The cervical spine is between the base of the skull and the top of the shoulders. The lumbar spine is the lower back below where the ribs stop.
3. A strain happens when a muscle is stretched, torn or injured. The pain that you feel is caused by inflammation (swelling) or bruising in the muscle. A strain is not the same as a sprain. A sprain is an injury to a ligament that holds bones together.
4. A cervical strain occurs when the head snaps forwards during an accident or a fall. The muscles can easily be strained with this type of movement. Its normal to experience pain over the muscles around the neck but not over the bones of the cervical spine.
5. A lumbar strain occurs when the back is snapped forwards during an accident or a fall or when bending over and lifting something.
6. Your doctor did not find any significant pain over the bones in your neck or back (even though you might have pain in the neck and/or back muscles). This means it is very unlikely that you have a fracture in your neck or back.
 Your doctor did not think it was necessary to take an x-ray.
 The x-ray of your neck and/or back showed no evidence of broken bones.
7. Apply a warm damp washcloth to the painful area for 20 minutes at a time, at least 4 times per day. This will reduce your pain. Massaging your muscles might also help.
8. It is normal to feel stiffness and pain in your neck and/or back after a strain. This pain may last for the next few days. If your pain stays about the same or gets better, you probably do not need to see a doctor. However, if your symptoms get worse or you have new symptoms, you should return here or go to the nearest Emergency Department.
9. Call your physician or go to the nearest Emergency Department if your pain doesn't improve within 4 weeks or your pain is bad enough to seriously limit your normal activities.

YOU SHOULD SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY, EITHER HERE OR AT THE NEAREST EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCURS:

- Your arms and legs tingle or get numb (lose feeling).
- Your arms or legs are weak.
- You feel that your neck is unstable.
- You lose control of your bladder or bowels. If this were to happen, it may cause you to wet or soil yourself, or it could cause difficulty emptying your bladder.
- Your pain gets worse.