

Cervical Dislocation

Cervical dislocations are the displacement of the cervical vertebra found in the neck. Most of the dislocations are due to a blunt trauma, such as a sports injury or car accident. The dislocation happens when the cervical ligament gets torn from the small bones supporting the spine when they get dislodged from their position within the column. Many people refer to a cervical dislocation as snapping the spine or breaking the neck, but these phrases often describe a fracture more than a dislocation (it should be noted that fracture and dislocation often occur together). Even though a fracture is where the bone is broken, a dislocation threatens your spinal cord and it requires immediate medical treatment to prevent any internal damage, so is often significantly more serious.

Cervical Dislocation Anatomy

Cervical dislocations are classified based upon their location and region of the fracture or injury pattern. Due to the unique anatomy of the spine within the region near the head, cervical injuries are often classified as occipital-cervical (C2) and subaxial cervical spine (C3-7) injuries. In all of these categories, injuries can be further stratified based upon the specific injury location and injury pattern.



How to Treat a Cervical Dislocation:

1. Immobilization

By immobilizing the area, you can minimize the risk of additional injury from occurring to the area. A neck brace and back brace work to keep everything in place and minimize the pain and discomfort felt from a cervical dislocation. Immobilization is usually performed by paramedics or first aiders.

2. Narcotic Pain Medication

Depending on the severity of the pain, narcotics might be ideal to help you overcome the pain and discomfort you are feeling at the time. Even though this medication can help address more severe pain, it should only be used on a short-term basis.

3. Surgery

Based upon the severity of the dislocation, surgery can help to realign the vertebra and secure them in place. By getting everything back in place, you can begin the path to recovery and healing without having to deal with all of the pain that you once felt.

4. Physical Therapy

Taking the time to visit a physical therapist will help to strengthen the injured area. When going through physical therapy, you will get the area moving and help to minimize the amount of swelling and inflammation that ensues from ignoring the area and not doing anything to get it moving.

Tips:

- Men who are between the ages of 15 and 24 suffer are most commonly affected... the injuries are attributed to contact sports, car accidents and violent acts.
- Older adults, aged 55 and older, end up suffering with this injury from degenerative diseases, accidental falls, and rheumatoid arthritis.
- For those suffering with a mild case of dislocation, neck pain, weak muscles and limited neck movement are common.
- Severe cases of cervical dislocation cause difficulty breathing, paralysis and lack of muscle coordination.
- Extensive nerve damage, especially those that relate to dislocating the first and the second vertebrae in the column, can wind up causing permanent paralysis and potentially death.