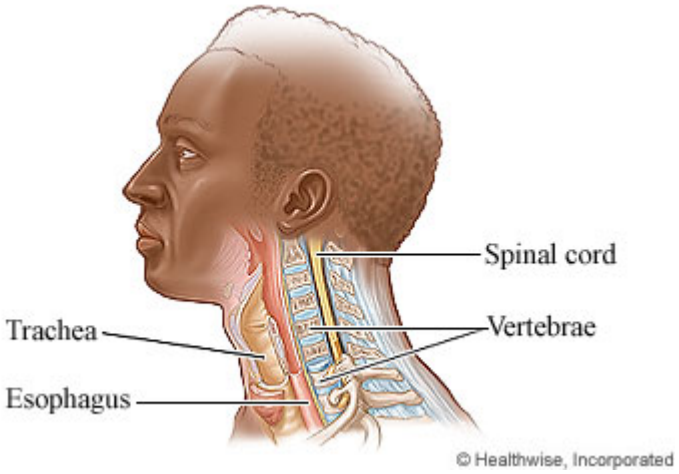
Broken Neck: Care Instructions



Your Care Instructions

A broken neck can range from a small, hairline crack, to a bone or bones breaking into two or more pieces. Treatment for a broken neck depends on how bad the break is and which bones are involved. You may be sent home with a neck brace or collar. You can help your neck heal with care at home.

You heal best when you take good care of yourself. Eat a variety of healthy foods, and don't smoke.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- If you were fitted for a neck brace, wear it exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not take it off until your doctor tells you to.
- Be safe with medicines. Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
    - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
    - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.
- Follow your doctor's directions for returning to your normal activities.
- Do any exercises that you are given to keep your muscles strong and reduce stiffness.
- You can try using heat or ice to see if it helps.
    - Try using a heating pad on a low or medium setting for 15 to 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours. Try a warm shower in place of one session with the heating pad. You can also buy single-use heat wraps that last up to 8 hours.
    - You can also try an ice pack for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours.

- Make sure that paths in your home are clear so that you do not fall. Also make sure that lighting is good and that carpets are tacked down to prevent tripping.
- Do not drive unless your doctor says that it is okay. If you are allowed to drive, always wear a seat belt.
- Talk to your doctor about medicines or changes in your diet that can help make your bones stronger.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You are unable to move an arm or a leg at all.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new or worse symptoms in your arms, legs, belly, or buttocks. Symptoms may include:
  - Numbness or tingling.
  - Weakness.
  - Pain.
- You lose bladder or bowel control.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You are not getting better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to https://www.healthwise.net/patiented

Enter **U000** in the search box to learn more about **"Broken Neck: Care Instructions".**

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