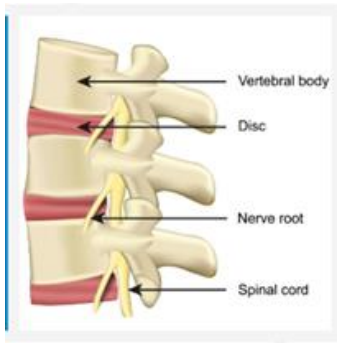


Neck injury and cervical collars

The neck and spine



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The neck is made up of bones of the spine called vertebrae. Muscles, tendons and ligaments attach to the vertebrae and work together to:

- Protect the spinal cord.
- Support the head.
- Allow movement in the neck.

The neck also contains:

- Major blood vessels that carry blood to and from the neck.
- The spinal cord that controls all body movements.
- The trachea, or wind pipe, that brings air in and out of lungs.
- The esophagus, a tube that food travels through to the stomach.

The neck and injury

Because the neck is so flexible and supports the head, injuries are very common.

Common causes of neck injuries in children include falls and motor vehicle collisions.

Symptoms of neck injuries include pain, muscle spasms, and neck stiffness. Irritation to the spinal cord may also cause weakness, numbness, or tingling down one arm.

Injuries to the neck can:

- Pull, tear, or stretch muscles, tendons, or ligaments.
- Damage joints or discs between vertebra.
- Dislocate, compress, or fracture vertebra.

Types of neck injuries

Muscle strain

- Injury to muscles that connect to the neck and move the head.
- Muscles may tear or stretch more than normal.

Ligament Strain

- Tearing, stretching, or pulling of the ligaments.

- Heals more slowly than bones or muscles.

Subluxation

- Movement of vertebra out of its normal position.
- Causes neck to become unstable.

Compression fracture

- Break in the vertebra bone, causing vertebra to collapse and shorten.

Pediatric cervical collar

Goal of cervical collar:

- To support the neck and head
- To decrease pain and inflammation
- To keep the neck straight (the best position for healing)
- To keep the neck still (moving the neck can increase the pain and slow down the healing)
- To prevent further damage to the injured tissues

Your provider will decide how long your child will need to wear the collar. This depends on the type of injury and how it is healing.

There are two types of pediatric cervical collars:



Aspen Pediatric Cervical Collar



Miami J Pediatric Cervical Collar

Caring for a child in a cervical collar

Before you go home, our team will show you:

- How to take the collar on and off.
- How to care for the collar and pads.
- How to care for the skin under the collar.

Things to remember

1. Keep a snug custom fit: It is important to keep your child's neck straight and still without moving or tilting. The team will decide on the best type of collar for your child.
2. Manage pain: There may be some discomfort from the neck injury and from the cervical collar. The neurosurgery or trauma team will make a plan for taking care of your child's pain while in the hospital and at home.
3. Limit activity: Your child can only do activities that will not hurt their neck or put them at risk for more injury. Do not allow your child to take part in sports or any rough activity until cleared by your doctor.
4. Bathing: Your child may take a shower or bath with the cervical collar on. We may suggest you keep two collars, in case one becomes damaged or you need to remove it for cleaning or a bath. The providers will tell you if your child can shower without the collar on.
5. When removing the collar, be careful to keep the head and neck from moving.

- a. Have your child sit quietly in one place.
 - b. Gently wash their neck with soap and water. Pat dry.
 - c. Check their skin for redness, irritation, rashes, bruising, bleeding, or swelling.
 - d. Do not use any powder or lotion on the skin under the collar.
 - e. Removing the collar too many times or keeping it off for too long can further damage the already injured tissues and stop healing.
6. Sleep with collar on: Sleeping may be hard at first, but your child will soon find a comfortable position. Encourage your child to sleep on their back. Regular pillows may be too high. You can try using a towel or blanket folded flat under your child's head.

Maintenance of collar and pads

- Use a gentle soap and warm water to clean the collar pads
- Do not wash in washing machine.
- Do not use heat on the pads.
- Clean plastic parts with antibacterial wipes.

When to call doctor

- Pain is getting worse.
- Skin irritation that does not heal.
- Numbness, tingling or weakness in any part of body.

For problems with cervical collar:

Please call Cook Children's Home Health Orthotics Department for any concerns you have about the fit of the cervical collar or if you need additional pads. (682-885-6295)

Neurology

For contacts or locations visit:

cookchildrens.org/services/neurosciences/contact-us/



These instructions are only general guidelines. Your healthcare provider may give you special instructions. If you have questions or concerns, please call your healthcare provider.