

## ADVICE ON WEARING A CERVICAL COLLAR

Now that you are wearing a Cervical Collar it is important for you to resume your normal activities as soon as possible, while remembering to protect your neck.

The main precautions are:

- **Avoid twisting or bending your neck**
- **Avoid lying on your stomach**
- **Avoid lifting heavy objects (more than 2lb/1kg in each hand)**
- **Avoid jarring your spine**
- **Reduce risk of falling by removing hazards from environment**

## CARE OF YOUR SKIN WHILST WEARING YOUR COLLAR

Before you go home make sure you are comfortable in your collar and that:

- You can get your collar on and off, with the assistance of the district nurse/carer
- The collar is comfortable and does not dig in or rub your skin
- It is important that your skin is checked daily to ensure that you are not developing any pressure sores

## ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING

### Sleeping

- Always wear your collar in bed unless told otherwise by your consultant.
- Your bed should be firm.
- Use only one pillow of sufficient thickness to support your neck without bending it (unless instructed otherwise).
- Sleep on your back, if this is uncomfortable sleep on your side.
- To get on and off the bed use the "log rolling" method you were shown on the ward. This method protects your back and neck from twisting.

### Sitting

- Sit upright with both feet flat on the floor. It is useful to have a small cushion or rolled up towel to support your lower back.
- Ideally choose a firm, high-backed armchair that supports your back.
- If you are in a reclined position your head should be supported too.
- Avoid sitting on low, soft armchairs or sofas, on the floor or on beanbags.

### Washing

- With your collar on you will be able to wash at a basin, sitting or standing as able.
- It is possible to shower with a collar on but it is recommended that you have assistance with this initially. The liners will need to be replaced after a shower, therefore discussing timing with the district nurse/carer is essential.
- The district nurse/carer will remove the collar daily, clean your neck and replace the liners.

**Hair washing** (for those who are not able to shower)

- Remember to keep your collar on. Use plenty of towels or cling film to avoid getting the collar wet.
- Sit on a chair with your back to the basin so that the basin is supporting your neck, put your head over the basin and get someone to help you wash your hair.

**Shaving**

- Keep your collar on whilst shaving.
- We recommend using an electric shaver rather than a wet shave to avoid soiling the collar.
- The district nurse/carer will be able to attend to the remaining hair removal under the collar.

**Dressing**

- Don't wear clothes under your collar as this may cause rubbing.
- Clothes should be comfortable and not too tight. You may find you require a larger size to go over the collar.
- Dress whilst sitting on a chair/bed, do not stand as you will be more likely to fall due to restricted vision.
- You may find a "Helping Hand" useful.

**Lifting and carrying**

- Avoid lifting and carrying heavy objects - only carry a couple of pounds (1kg) in each hand, or ask for help.
- Keep any weights close to your body.

**Hobbies and sports**

- Avoid any strenuous exercise, especially if pulling or pushing is involved.
- Contact/high impact sports i.e. rugby, football, netball, hockey, horse riding, skiing should not be attempted until given permission by your Consultant.

**Driving**

- It is illegal to drive whilst in your collar. Vision would be impeded due to the restricted movement of your neck.

**SYMPTOMS TO LOOK OUT FOR;**

- Numbness or weakness in your arms or legs
- Difficulty swallowing/choking
- Disturbed vision

**If you experience any of these symptoms please seek immediate medical intervention.**

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Trauma Admissions Unit Green	01202 448558
Trauma Admissions Unit Red	01202 448417
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