

This leaflet has been adapted with the permission from Royal London Hospital (Barts Health NHS Trust)

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Cervical collar

Patient and carer's information booklet





Level of injury	
Type of collar	
How long is the collar needed for?	
Your follow up appointment will be confirmed by your team, after your discharge. You may be asked to come in for a scan before your appointment.	

Useful Websites

DVLA – Medical Enquiries

Tel: 0870 600 0301

Website: www.dvla.gov.uk

Spinal Injury Association

Helpline: 0800 980 0501

Website: www.spinal.co.uk

Backcare

Information about managing back pain

Helpline: 0845 130 2704

Website: www.backcare.org.uk

Benefit Enquiry line

Free phone: 0800 882 200

Text phone: 0800 243 355

British Association of Spinal Surgeons

Website: [British Association of Spine Surgeons - Home](http://www.bas-spine.org.uk)

Aspen Collar Information

Website: <https://www.promedics.co.uk/collections/vista>

Ossur – Miami J Collar information

Website: <https://www.ossur.com/en-us/bracing-and-supports/spine>

Outsiders

Sex and disability advice.

Helpline: 07770 884 985

Website: www.outsiders.org

Useful contacts

Whittington Health Spine team

Email: whh-tr.whittspinaltherapists@nhs.net

Phone: 0207 272 3070 Bleep 2722

Available hours: Mon – Fri, 8.30am to 3pm

Complex Spine CNS team

Email: bartshealth.spinalcnsteam@nhs.net

Phone: 07508 543 636

Working hours: Mon – Fri, 9am to 3pm

Why do I need a collar?

A cervical collar may be indicated after spinal injury and/or surgery. The collar does three things:

1. Immobilises your spine during healing
2. Stabilises and restricts movement in injured areas
3. Controls pain by restricting movement

Please do not stop using the collar until your Consultant / Specialist Nurse advises you to do so.

Your cervical collar needs to be worn at all times – this includes when sleeping and showering, unless otherwise indicated by your Consultant or Specialist Nurse. The only exception is during skin care / collar pads changes. The team will demonstrate how this can be done safely.

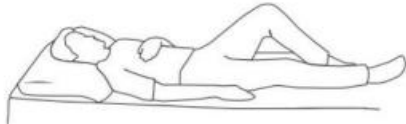
If you have any concerns relating to the use of the collar or increased pain or changes of feeling/sensation on your hands/arms, please contact the Spinal CNS team on 0207 272 3070 Bleep 2722. If you develop significant neurology issues (arm / leg weakness, hand clumsiness, unsteadiness when walking, bowel or bladder dysfunction) please attend A&E immediately. These are signs of potential injury to your spinal cord.

Sleeping advice

It may be difficult sleeping or getting comfortable initially whilst using a collar. You can sleep in any position you find comfortable – a softer pillow or folded towel can be more comfortable in the initial stages.

Getting Out of Bed

You will be taught how to log roll from side to side and how to get out of bed. The purpose of log rolling is to avoid twisting the spine at the hips when moving in bed.



Bend your left knee and place your left arm across your chest.



Roll all in one motion to the right. Always move in one unit. Reverse for rolling to the left.

Getting Into Bed



Sit on the side.

Gently lower yourself using your arms for support and swinging your legs up onto the bed in one motion. Do not twist.

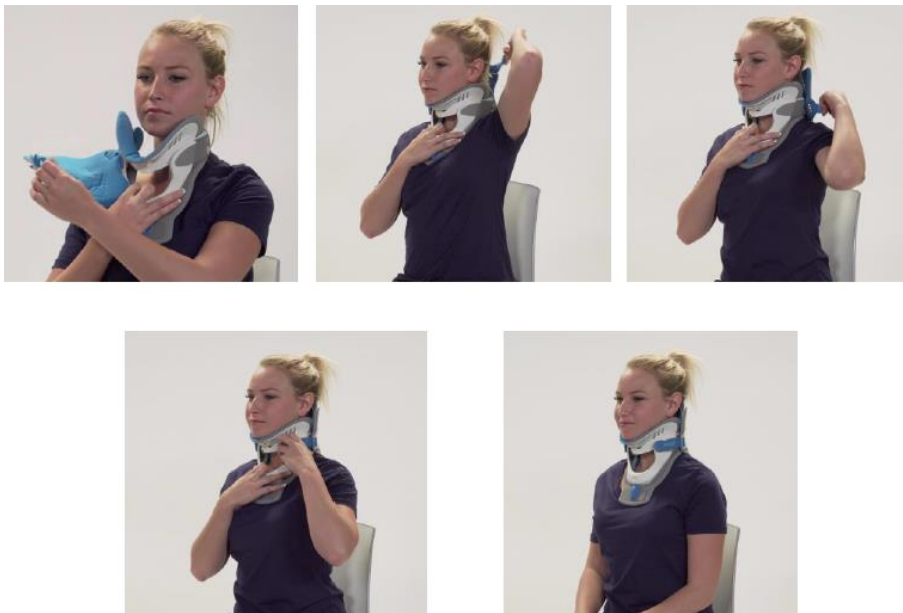


Additional Information

Collar changes

You and/or your family or carer, will be shown how to change the collar and pads before your discharge. You will also be given specific advice and instructions, and these will be added to your discharge summary.

You or your family/carer will be asked to change the collar, under our team supervision, to make sure you feel comfortable to carry out this task at home.



Precautions

Whilst you are using the collar, and until otherwise advised by the Spinal team, **you should not:**

- Try to twist your neck
- Sit, stand up or walk around without your collar
- Do any activities that strain or put pressure on your neck
- Lift medium to heavy weight objects (more than 2kgs)
- Do any form of high speed/contact sports or gym
- Drive

Showering and hygiene / grooming considerations

Unless otherwise indicated, you must shower with your collar on. The pads and the collar can safely get wet.

The team will provide a spare set of pads for the collar so that these can be changed daily or alternate days, following your shower. Your team will show you how to safely change the pads of your collar.

Changing and washing these pads regularly is crucial to maintain skin integrity and overall durability of the pads.

Please ensure you and/or your carer clean and moisturise the skin underneath the collar at the time of collar changes.

Shaving – your ward team will give you specific advice regarding shaving.

You must keep your collar on whilst brushing your teeth.

Use loose fitting and comfortable clothes; your collar must sit under your clothing.

Exercise / Walking / Work

You must not engage in any form of exercise whilst using your collar; you must avoid any high-speed activities, running, bending or lifting of loads.

Walking is the only form of activity that will not put at risk the healing of your fracture. Aim to walk short distances for the first few days and gradually increase your time and tolerance. Please be aware your neck/shoulder may feel sore for the first few days – this is normal. Wear sensible shoes.

Your Specialist Nurse will give you specific advice about returning to work. Avoid lifting more than 2kg. If possible, have assistance with heavier tasks, such as shopping, vacuuming, laundry, carrying pots/pans and other kitchen appliances, gardening and child care (do not lift children).

Skin care / pressure ulcer prevention

If your collar is not applied properly, or if the above advice regarding skin care is not followed, you may develop a pressure sore. A pressure sore is an injury caused by unrelieved pressure, usually on bony prominences (i.e., collar bone, chin).

Signs of pressure damage to skin:

- Redness, skin discoloration
- Tenderness or pain in the affected area
- Blisters / broken skin

To reduce the risk of developing a pressure sore, you must:

- Clean, check and moisturise your skin daily
- Change the collar pads daily or when they are wet / visibly dirty
- Make sure the pads are dry, before applying them to the collar

Sexual Activity

Unless otherwise instructed, you may engage in sexual activity when you are ready to do so. However, you may need to assume a more passive role until you have been cleared by your Consultant / Specialist Nurse.