

Your Auto Accident Recovery Guide

What to do after a car accident — including why to get checked even when you feel fine.

The hours and days after a crash go better with a simple plan. Adrenaline can mask a real injury for hours or even a day or two, so feeling okay at the scene isn't proof you came through unharmed. Injuries like whiplash and soft-tissue strains often surface on a delay. Here's how to protect yourself now and give your recovery the best start.

What to do after a crash

- 1 Check for injuries first.** Make sure you and everyone involved are okay before worrying about the cars or paperwork. Call 911 for anything serious — when in doubt, treat it as an emergency.
- 2 Get checked even if you feel fine.** Crash injuries frequently take hours or days to show up, because adrenaline masks the pain and swelling builds gradually. A prompt exam catches problems early and puts your injury on record while it's fresh.
- 3 Document everything.** Photograph the vehicles, damage, plates, and the wider scene; exchange names, phone numbers, and insurance details; and note the time, location, and weather — details fade fast.
- 4 Write down how you feel.** Even "I feel fine" is worth recording, because your symptoms may change over the next few days — and that record helps your doctor and the insurance process later.
- 5 Don't tough it out.** If stiffness, headaches, or soreness show up in the days after, don't wait it out — get evaluated promptly, before a fresh injury settles into a lasting pattern.

Common crash injuries

- **Whiplash** — the rapid back-and-forth motion strains the neck's muscles, ligaments, and joints.
- **Concussion** — the force can shake the brain inside the skull even if you never hit your head.
- **Back & disc strain** — the low back absorbs a lot of a crash; a disc can bulge and irritate a nearby nerve.
- **Muscle guarding** — the body tightens to protect the injured area, leaving you stiff and sore.

⚠️ **Seek emergency care right away if...**

- You have a **severe or worsening headache, confusion, repeated vomiting, unusual drowsiness or trouble waking, one pupil larger than the other**, or a **seizure** — these can signal a serious brain injury; call 911 or go to the ER
- You have **numbness or weakness in the arms or legs**, or a **loss of bladder or bowel control** — a possible spinal injury; **do not move the person and call 911**
- You have **severe neck or back pain, chest or abdominal pain, trouble breathing**, or **any loss of consciousness**

These need emergency evaluation right now — not a wait-and-see approach. When you're unsure, call 911.

How we help at Thrive

Once a doctor has ruled out anything serious, much of what's left after a crash is musculoskeletal — strained muscles and ligaments, joints that stiffened on impact, and the muscle guarding your body throws up to shield the injured area. At Thrive Chiropractic in Troy, care is conservative and built around your exam. Dr. Rubinstein may combine **gentle chiropractic adjustments** to restore motion where a **spinal subluxation** is limiting it, **massage and soft-tissue therapy** to ease muscle guarding, and **upper cervical care** when the top of the neck is involved. If the exam points to a disc pressing on a nerve, **spinal decompression** may be part of the plan.

We're honest about scope: this works alongside your medical evaluation, never in place of it, and it helps recovery go more smoothly over a series of visits rather than a one-time cure. A concussion is medically managed by your physician — we support the neck-related side. You'll get a specific plan and timeline after your exam.

Call us

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Online

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Visit us

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Book a visit

thrivechiropractic Troy.com/schedule

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