

## WHEN YOU NO LONGER NEED THE COLLAR



London Health Sciences Centre  
Trauma Program

When your doctor tells you that your neck is healed, you can begin weaning out of the collar.

Your neck muscles need to strengthen and adjust to holding your head up again so it is important that you gradually wean out of the collar

You can begin by not wearing the collar in bed, when eating or bathing.

**Day 1 and 2:** Leave the collar off for 2 hours in the morning, put it back on for the day and then remove it for 2 hours before bed

**Day 3, 4, 5:** Leave the collar off for 3 hours in the morning, put it back on for the day and then remove it for 3 hours before bed

**Day 6, 7, 8, 9:** Leave the collar off for 4 hours in the morning, put it back on for the day and then remove it for 4 hours before bed

**Day 10, 11, 12, 13, 14:** Leave the collar off for 5 hours in the morning, put it back on for the day and then remove it for 5 hours before bed

**Day 15:** Begin to leave the collar off entirely

**If you have any questions or concerns please feel to speak with the health care provider that provided you with this brochure.**



London Health Sciences Centre

Patient Information

## Cervical Collar Care



## What is a Cervical Collar?

A cervical collar is a neck brace used to immobilize and maintain normal posture after an injury to the neck.

Your doctor may use the collar to manage a neck fracture to allow the bones to heal. Your doctor may also perform surgery and require you to wear the collar afterwards to allow your neck to heal.

You should receive specific instructions from your medical team on when to wear your collar (*e.g., at all times, only when out of bed or only for comfort*). Check with your medical team if you are unsure.

If you are wearing your collar in bed, a flat pillow or folded sheet is better for your posture than a thick pillow that pushes your head forward when you are lying on your back. You may need a thicker pillow if you are lying on your side.

Each piece of the collar is labeled as "front" or "back" and has an arrow pointing up. You may notice that the pieces are different sizes; sometimes this is necessary to achieve the best fit.

The collar must be removed at least once daily. You must lie in bed, on your back, keep your head still and always look up at the ceiling whenever taking off or putting on your collar.

It is easier to apply and remove the collar if you have a helper but many people are able to learn to do it by themselves. Keeping a hand held mirror beside your bed will help you check to see that the collar is on properly before you get out of bed.

## How to put the Cervical Collar on

Lie on your back. Push the back of the collar into the bed and slide it under your neck until it is centered.

Place the front of the collar on by scooping it under your chin. Tuck the sides of front piece inside the back piece and secure with the Velcro straps. If the straps are uneven, readjust the collar pieces.

**\*\*If you are wearing a beige foam collar, the back piece tucks inside the front \*\***

Make sure that the hard plastic does not touch your skin. If needed, reposition the soft liner.

## How to take the Cervical Collar off

Lie on your back, undo the Velcro straps, and remove the front of the collar. Slide the back piece of the collar out without lifting your head off the bed. When the collar is off, you should check your skin for any reddened or sore areas, wash and dry your neck and change the removable pads inside the collar.

Pads should be hand washed with mild soap, rinsed well, squeezed in a towel and laid flat to dry overnight. Do not put them in the washing machine or dryer.

If your doctor has ordered ruffs (soft collar) to be worn in bed, you should slide the ruffs in under your neck without lifting your head. If you are wearing 2 ruffs, the knots should be tied off to each side to provide the best support.