

## Common Causes of Lower Back Pain After a Car Accident

### When to seek medical help. When to contact a lawyer.

Lower back pain is a common consequence of [car accidents](#), even at low speeds. The severity of the pain can vary from mild discomfort to debilitating injury, making it essential to understand the underlying causes in order to seek appropriate medical care and legal guidance.

In Florida, victims are eligible to pursue compensation through the state's no-fault insurance system, which provides coverage for medical expenses and lost wages via Personal Injury Protection (PIP). In cases involving more serious injuries, victims may also file claims against the at-fault driver.

However, claims involving lower back pain can present challenges, as insurance companies often scrutinize the extent of the injury due to the subjective nature of pain. Victims who are well-informed about the specific causes of their pain and the importance of detailed medical documentation are better positioned to protect themselves throughout the claims process. While being proactive is crucial, [contacting](#) an experienced Florida car accident lawyer can further support victims in gathering evidence and countering insurance company tactics.

### Underlying causes of lower back pain after a car accident

The human spine is complex, with muscles, tendons, nerves, and bones working together. When a car accident occurs, the force of impact can jar the body, disrupting this balance. The lumbar region (lower back) is particularly vulnerable to injury because it bears much of the body's weight and is responsible for flexibility and movement. Sudden impacts, twisting motions, or rapid deceleration can all contribute to lower back injuries. Common types of injuries underlying back pain after a car accident include:

- **Whiplash**

While whiplash is typically associated with neck pain, it can also result in significant lower back pain. In rear-end collisions, the rapid forward and backward motion of the spine overstretches muscles, ligaments, and tendons in the lower back. This leads to inflammation, pain, and stiffness that can last for months or even years. Treatment often involves physical therapy, pain management, and extended recovery time.

- **Herniated discs**

A herniated disc often occurs when the force of a collision compresses the spine, causing one or more discs between the vertebrae to rupture or bulge. This can place pressure on surrounding nerves, leading to sharp lower back pain, numbness, and leg pain. Herniated discs may require extensive care, including MRI scans, physical therapy, and sometimes surgery.

- **Spinal fractures**

In high-speed collisions or severe impacts, the vertebrae can fracture, particularly through compression, where the front portion of the vertebra is crushed by the force of the crash. Spinal fractures often cause intense pain, particularly during movement, and can result in nerve damage or paralysis if not treated promptly. Recovery typically involves hospitalization, bracing, and possible surgical intervention.

- **Soft tissue injuries**

Soft tissue injuries, also known as musculoskeletal injuries, such as strains or sprains in the muscles, ligaments, or tendons, frequently occur in car accidents when the body is subjected to violent jerking or twisting motions. While these injuries might seem less severe than fractures, they can result in significant lower back pain, swelling, and limited movement. Soft tissue injuries often require weeks or months of physical therapy and pain management, leading to significant medical bills and time off work.

- **Facet joint injuries**

Facet joints, which allow flexibility and movement in the spine, can be damaged in a crash due to the impact or sudden twisting of the body. Facet joint injuries cause sharp, localized pain in the lower back, especially when bending or twisting. Diagnosing and treating these injuries can require specialized care, including MRIs, facet joint injections, and sometimes surgery.

- **Spinal cord injuries (SCIs)**

Spinal cord injuries are among the most severe outcomes of a car accident. The intense force of a collision can cause the spinal cord to be bruised, torn, or even severed, leading to paralysis, loss of sensation, and chronic pain. These injuries often require emergency surgery, lengthy hospital stays, and long-term rehabilitation.

- **Spondylolisthesis**

Spondylolisthesis occurs when a vertebra shifts out of place due to the force of a car accident, pressing on nearby nerves. This displacement can cause severe lower back pain, weakness, and numbness in the legs. Spondylolisthesis often requires physical therapy, chiropractic care, and sometimes spinal fusion surgery to stabilize the spine.

- **Disc degeneration or exacerbation of pre-existing conditions**

A car accident can worsen pre-existing back conditions, such as degenerative disc disease (DDD). The impact from a collision can accelerate the degeneration of spinal discs or cause a previously stable condition to become symptomatic. This often leads to chronic lower back pain and nerve compression, requiring ongoing medical treatment such as therapy, medication, or surgery.

- **Nerve damage (sciatica)**

Sciatica can develop after a car accident when a disc herniation or spinal fracture

compresses the sciatic nerve, causing radiating pain from the lower back down the legs. This nerve damage can significantly affect mobility and daily functioning. Treatment often involves a combination of physical therapy, epidural steroid injections, and, in severe cases, surgery to relieve nerve pressure.

Lower back pain can develop immediately after the accident or take several days to appear. The adrenaline rush during the accident may mask the initial pain, leading many people to feel fine immediately afterward. However, once the adrenaline subsides, the pain may set in as the body begins to respond to the injury.

### **When to seek medical help for lower back pain after a car accident**

If you experience lower back pain after a car accident, it's crucial to see a healthcare professional as soon as possible. Delaying treatment can worsen injuries, and early intervention may help prevent long-term complications. Your doctor can perform diagnostic tests, such as X-rays or MRIs, to determine the extent of the injury and recommend appropriate treatment. Common treatments may include physical therapy, medications, or in severe cases, surgery.

Failing to treat lower back pain after a car accident can lead to chronic pain, mobility issues, and a reduced quality of life. Some injuries, like herniated discs, can worsen over time if left untreated, potentially leading to nerve damage or permanent disability. Chronic lower back pain may also affect other areas of your life, including your ability to work, exercise, and perform everyday tasks. Early diagnosis and treatment are key to preventing these long-term complications.

### **PIP time deadlines and coverage**

Personal Injury Protection (PIP) is "no fault" coverage – that is, coverage to you personally, regardless of who is at fault for causing the accident, if injuries are involved. If you suffered neck and/or back injuries in an accident caused by the negligence of another driver, additional insurance coverages may be available including bodily injury liability coverage and uninsured and/or underinsured motorist coverage.

In Florida, you must seek medical treatment within 14 days of a car accident to be eligible for PIP benefits. The 14-day rule is part of Florida's no-fault insurance system, which aims to ensure prompt medical care and streamline the insurance claims process.

If you don't seek medical treatment within the 14-day window, your insurance company can deny your claim for those services. You can continue seeking treatment after the initial two-week period and still receive coverage.

You usually have 30 days to file your PIP claim, but the timeframe varies by policy. If you have severe injuries, you can pursue compensation from the driver who caused the accident within two years of the accident date.

But it's still important to seek medical care quickly to connect your injuries with the accident. Insurance companies may try to invalidate your claim by attributing injuries to pre-existing medical concerns or downplaying the degree of physical damage.

### **When to contact a lawyer about car accident-related back pain**

For Florida car accident victims experiencing back pain, consulting a lawyer can help protect their rights to seek financial compensation. It's especially important to contact a lawyer if:

- **The back pain is severe or chronic.** If the injury requires ongoing medical treatment, rehabilitation, or causes a significant impact on a person's ability to work or perform daily activities, a lawyer can help pursue compensation for medical expenses, lost income, and non-economic damages such as pain and suffering.
- **The insurance company disputes or denies the claim.** Insurance providers may attempt to minimize claims, particularly when dealing with back pain. An experienced lawyer can build a strong case to ensure the injury is fully recognized and appropriately compensated.
- **Liability for the accident is contested or unclear.** In cases where fault is disputed or ambiguous, legal representation becomes crucial. An attorney can collect and analyze critical evidence – such as medical reports, accident reconstructions, and expert testimony – to establish a clear link between the accident and the resulting back injury.
- **The full extent of the injury is uncertain.** Back pain can initially seem minor but may develop into more serious, long-term conditions. A lawyer can help ensure that any settlement includes compensation for future medical expenses and complications.
- **Assistance is needed to navigate the complexities of the claims process.** The legal and insurance systems can be intricate and challenging, particularly for those unfamiliar with their workings. A lawyer can handle the administrative and procedural aspects of the claim, ensuring that all paperwork is properly filed, deadlines are met, and that a client's best interests are represented throughout negotiations.

### **Free car accident case reviews in Palm Beach Gardens**

If you're suffering from lower back pain after a car accident in Florida, navigating the claims process can be overwhelming. Insurance companies often downplay or fight these types of claims, leaving you with mounting medical bills and financial uncertainty. That's where [The Law Offices of Casey D. Shomo, P.A.](#) can make all the difference. With [over \\$85 million recovered](#) for accident victims, Mr. Shomo and his skilled legal team will handle the complex negotiations

with insurance companies, ensuring you get the compensation you deserve. Don't face this process alone – contact The Law Offices of Casey D. Shomo, P.A. today for a [free case review](#).