

What to Know About Spinal Cord Injuries After a Car Accident in Arizona

Find out how a skilled Arizona lawyer can help you fight back

[Car accidents](#) are a leading cause of spinal cord injuries in Arizona, and the consequences can be life-altering. If you or a loved one has suffered a [spinal cord injury](#) in a crash, you're likely facing overwhelming medical, emotional, and financial challenges. Understanding your rights and the steps you need to take can help in your recovery and your ability to secure the compensation you deserve.

What is a crash-related spinal cord injury?

A spinal cord injury (SCI) occurs when trauma damages the bundle of nerves that run down your spine, disrupting communication between your brain and the rest of your body. These injuries can range from mild to severe, and the effects depend on where the damage occurs and how extensive it is.

The most common types of SCIs from car accidents include:

- **Complete injuries:** Total loss of sensation and movement below the injury site.
- **Incomplete injuries:** Partial loss of function, with some sensation or movement remaining.

How do spinal cord injuries happen in car accidents?

Spinal cord injuries don't happen in every car accident, but certain types of collisions are far more likely to cause this kind of devastating trauma. The most common causes include:

- **Rear-end collisions:** [Rear-end crashes](#) are among the most common causes of spinal cord injuries, especially when one vehicle strikes another at high speed. The sudden jolt can force your head and neck to snap forward and backward violently, a motion known as whiplash.
- **Rollover accidents:** Vehicles that roll over due to a collision, sharp turn, or loss of control put occupants at high risk for spinal cord injuries. During a rollover, your body may be thrown around inside the vehicle, and the roof can collapse, crushing or twisting your spine.
- **Side-impact (T-bone) collisions:** When a vehicle is struck from the side, the impact can cause your body to be thrown sideways, often into the door or console. The sudden lateral force in a [T-bone accident](#) can fracture vertebrae or displace discs, which can lead to spinal cord compression or laceration.

- **Head-on collisions:** [Head-on crashes](#) are among the most severe and deadly types of car accidents. The combined speed of two vehicles colliding head-first creates an enormous amount of force, which can cause catastrophic injuries.
- **Ejection from the vehicle:** Being ejected from a car is one of the most dangerous scenarios for spinal cord injuries. The force of being thrown from the vehicle, combined with the impact of hitting the ground or another object, can cause severe spinal fractures, or complete severing of the spinal cord.
- **High-speed collisions:** The faster a vehicle travels, the greater the force of impact, and the higher the risk of spinal cord injury. [High-speed crashes](#) often result in more severe trauma due to the energy involved.

How do I know if I have a spinal injury after a car accident?

Spinal injuries aren't always obvious right after a car accident. Adrenaline and shock can mask pain, and some symptoms may take hours or even days to appear. Here's what to watch for:

- **Pain and stiffness:** Persistent pain or stiffness in your neck, back, or spine is one of the most common signs of a spinal injury. This pain may be sharp, dull, or radiating, and it might worsen with movement.
- **Numbness or tingling:** A feeling of numbness, tingling, or "pins and needles" in your arms, hands, legs, or feet can signal nerve damage or compression in your spine.
- **Weakness or loss of coordination:** If you notice weakness in your limbs, difficulty walking, or trouble with balance and coordination, it could indicate damage to your spinal cord.
- **Loss of bladder or bowel control:** This is a red flag for a serious spinal injury. If you're unable to control your bladder or bowels, or if you have difficulty urinating, seek emergency medical care right away.
- **Muscle spasms or reflex problems:** Uncontrollable muscle spasms, exaggerated reflexes, or sudden muscle weakness can all be signs of spinal cord trauma.
- **Difficulty breathing:** Injuries to the upper spine can affect the nerves that control your diaphragm and chest muscles, making it harder to breathe.
- **Changes in sensation:** A spinal injury can cause unusual sensations, such as burning, prickling, or a "buzzing" feeling in your extremities. You might also experience heightened sensitivity to touch or temperature.
- **Paralysis:** In severe cases, a spinal cord injury can cause partial or complete paralysis. This may affect one side of your body, your legs, or all four limbs, depending on where the injury is located. Paralysis is a medical emergency and requires immediate attention.

- **Headaches or neck pain:** If you have a headache that won't go away, especially if it's accompanied by neck pain or stiffness, it could be a sign of a spinal injury. This is especially true if the pain started after a car accident.

What should I do right after a car accident if I suspect a spinal cord injury?

The moments and days following a car accident are crucial, especially if you suspect a spinal cord injury. Here's what you need to do:

- **Seek medical help immediately:** Even if you feel fine, some symptoms don't appear right away. A medical professional can assess your condition, order imaging tests, and start treatment if needed. Always follow your doctor's advice and keep records of all medical visits, diagnoses, and treatments.
- **Report the crash:** Arizona law requires you to report any car accident involving injury, death, or significant property damage. Call the police and file an official report. This document will be important for insurance claims and any legal action you may take later.
- **Preserve evidence:** If you're able, take photos of the crash scene, your injuries, and any damage to your vehicle. Also, get contact information from witnesses. This evidence can help establish what happened and who was at fault.
- **Notify your insurance company:** Inform your insurance provider about the car accident, but be careful what you say. Stick to the facts and avoid admitting fault or speculating about your injuries. Insurance companies often look for ways to minimize payouts, so it's best to consult with an attorney before giving a detailed statement.
- **Seek legal help:** Don't go it alone. Insurance companies often try to shift the blame or downplay your injuries to reduce the amount of money they owe. Let an experienced Arizona car accident lawyer deal with them on your behalf while you focus on recovery.

How do Arizona laws affect my right to compensation after a spinal cord injury?

Arizona follows a "comparative negligence" rule, which means that if you're partially at fault for the accident, your compensation may be reduced by your percentage of fault. For example, if you're found to be 20% responsible, you can still recover 80% of your damages.

The types of compensation you may be entitled to include:

- **Medical expenses:** Hospital bills, surgeries, medications, physical therapy, and future medical care.
- **Lost wages:** Income you've lost due to your injury, as well as reduced earning capacity if you can't return to work.

- **Pain and suffering:** Compensation for physical pain, emotional distress, and loss of enjoyment of life.
- **Future care costs:** Long-term care, home modifications, and assistive devices.

It's important to act quickly. In Arizona, you generally have two years from the date of the accident to file a personal injury lawsuit. Missing this deadline can bar you from seeking compensation altogether.

Why do I need an Arizona personal injury attorney for my spinal cord injury case?

Spinal cord injury cases are complex. Insurance companies often try to settle quickly for far less than you deserve, and proving the full extent of your damages requires legal expertise.

An experienced personal injury attorney can:

- **Investigate the accident:** Gather evidence, interview witnesses, and work with accident reconstruction experts to establish liability.
- **Calculate your damages:** Ensure all current and future costs are accounted for, including medical care, lost wages, and pain and suffering.
- **Negotiate with insurers:** Handle communications and negotiations to protect your rights and maximize your settlement.
- **Take your case to court:** If necessary, a lawyer can file a lawsuit and represent you in court to fight for fair compensation.

Insurance adjusters are trained to protect their company's bottom line, not your best interests. Having a skilled attorney on your side levels the playing field and gives you the best chance at a full recovery, both physically and financially.

Get the Anti-Lawyer Lawyer on your side

If you've suffered a spinal injury in a car accident, the road ahead isn't just about healing; it's about protecting your future. Medical bills pile up fast, insurance companies play dirty, and the stress of it all can feel crushing. That's where [Browne Law Group](#) comes in. We don't just handle cases; we fight for people like you, who've been hurt through no fault of their own. Our team knows how spinal injuries upend lives, and we're here to make sure you get every dollar you deserve for your medical care, lost wages, and pain and suffering.

You pay nothing upfront for our service. We work on a contingency fee basis, meaning we only get paid if we win your case. Plus, your first consultation is always free with no pressure or further obligation. Whether your car accident happened in Gilbert, Mesa, Chandler, or anywhere in Maricopa County, we're ready to listen, answer your questions, and map out a plan

tailored to your needs. [Contact us](#) today to set up a free consultation with a lawyer who knows how to fight back against insurance companies.