Car accidents cause damage. The most obvious and visible damage is the destruction that your vehicle can sustain during the collision. But car accidents also cause damage to your body that may not be immediately visible.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation reported that 278,413 car accidents occurred on New Jersey public roads in 2018. Of those accidents, a total of 61,043 resulted in injuries to one or more of the people involved in the crash. Considering that there is a one-in-five chance of a car accident causing you to become injured, it’s important to know what kind of injuries can commonly occur if you are involved in a collision.

Automobile collisions involve a great deal of force being applied very rapidly - as two vehicles collide with one another. The direction and amount of force can cause damage to your body by twisting and bending it in ways it is not meant to bend.

**Soft Tissue Injuries**
1| **Bruising/Contusions**

Even the most minor of car accidents can cause bruises. A collision can slam you into your seat belt, which, while doing its job of keeping you from serious harm, can leave you with a bruise for a couple of days afterwards. Bruises are rarely serious injuries requiring medical attention, and will generally heal within a week or two.

2| **Whiplash**

The forces at work in a car accident can cause your body to move in ways that it is not meant to, at speeds that it should not move at. If you experience pain or discomfort in your neck and back after a collision, it is likely that you have sustained whiplash – strains to your muscles and ligaments. These strains can be painful and take several weeks to recover, but whiplash rarely results in permanent injury on its own.

3| **Neck/Back injuries**

Like with whiplash, the intense and rapid force that your body undergoes during a collision can cause serious damage to your body that may not be immediately apparent. It can cause herniations or ruptures of the discs in your spine; serious injuries that are very painful and limit your mobility. If pain persists after several days, or if you have a history of neck or back injuries or problems, consult with an orthopedist to see if you may have sustained a herniated disc. These injuries, while not always permanent, definitely take time to heal. Physical therapy is a very important step in returning to your healthy self, and surgery is not uncommon when you have sustained a serious neck or back injury.

**Head Injuries**

4| **Concussions**

During a collision, you can easily hit your head on parts of your car, causing a concussion. You may experience problems with your memories, like not remembering what you were doing prior to the collision, or feeling like your brain is just not working as quickly as it usually does. Prompt treatment for any kind of head injury is crucial. Not only will treatment help alleviate the headaches you will likely suffer, it will help restore your brain to a healthy state.

5| **Traumatic Brain Injuries**

These injuries can have potentially life-altering effects. A traumatic brain injury can change the way your brain functions, handles information and processes emotions. While you can you can recover from a brain injury to some degree, depending on the type and severity of the damage, treating it may be a lifelong process.

**Mental and Emotional Injuries**
6| Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

Anytime our bodies undergo a situation of extreme stress – such as a car accident – there is the potential to develop emotional and mental conditions such as PTSD. Symptoms can include being scared of driving after an accident, aversion to certain sounds or images that are associated with the collision, or even sleeping problems due to anxiety or nightmares. Treatment is your best option, as psychologists and therapists can help you combat PTSD and return to your normal life.

Internal Injuries

7| Broken Bones

The impact of a collision can cause your body to hit other parts of the vehicle, putting your skeleton under stress it cannot withstand. There are many ways this can occur. Your arm may be pinned between your body and the door, and fracture. Or the speed with which your seatbelt stops you may fracture some of your ribs. Broken bones are very common injuries and are rarely permanent or life-threatening, though some fractures may require surgery to set the bone and place hardware to help your bones heal. Depending on the type of break, you may require a month or two of rest and recovery, but you will likely be back to normal quite soon if your treatment goes well.

8| Internal Bleeding

Your organs are delicate. The forces of a car accident can damage them and cause them to bleed. These serious injuries are very common in high-speed collisions. It is important that they are treated promptly to keep them from threatening your life.

Car Accident Tips to Remember:

1. Wear a seatbelt: even if they do not prevent all injury, the act of wearing your seatbelt protects your body from even worse damage.

2. Call an ambulance and get to the hospital: prompt treatment of your injuries is the best way to make sure that you recover as quickly and fully as possible.

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