

Delayed-Onset Injuries and Their Legal Implications in Car Accident Cases

Our Maine car accident lawyers won't let the insurance companies take advantage of you

You walk away from a crash in Maine thinking you're lucky. No bleeding, no broken bones, and the car's still drivable. But a few days later, something feels off. Maybe your neck starts to ache, your back tightens up, or you can't focus like you used to.

That's not uncommon. In fact, many injuries caused by car accidents don't show up right away. These are known as delayed-onset injuries, and they can have serious consequences for your health and your legal case.

If you're dealing with pain, discomfort, or emotional distress days or weeks after a crash, it's important to take action immediately to protect your health and get compensation for your injuries. An experienced Maine [car accident lawyer](#) at Romanow Law Group can help. Here's what you need to know.

What are delayed-onset injuries?

Delayed-onset injuries are physical or psychological conditions that don't present symptoms immediately after a crash. Instead, they become noticeable hours, days, or even weeks later.

Your body reacts to trauma in strange ways. In the moments after a car accident, you're flooded with adrenaline. That fight-or-flight response can mask pain, make you feel fine, and delay your recognition of injury. But once the stress fades and your body settles, the damage starts to show.

Common delayed-onset injuries include:

- **Whiplash and soft tissue injuries:** Symptoms such as neck stiffness, headaches, or back pain might not show up for 24–72 hours.
- **Concussions and brain trauma:** Dizziness, nausea, memory problems, or light sensitivity can be subtle at first but can worsen over time.
- **Internal injuries:** Damage to organs or internal bleeding can take hours or days to trigger warning signs. These injuries can be life-threatening.
- **Psychological injuries:** Anxiety, PTSD, or emotional distress may not fully set in until well after the crash.

These injuries may seem minor at first, but they can grow into serious health issues if left untreated. That's why it's important to get checked out by a doctor as soon as possible after a car accident. A medical evaluation may uncover a hidden injury and allow you to get treatment before it worsens.

Why do some injuries take time to appear?

Just because you didn't go to the ER doesn't mean you're fine. There are a few reasons symptoms don't always show up right away:

- **Adrenaline masks pain:** After a crash, your body is in survival mode. The hormone surge dulls pain and boosts alertness. Once it wears off, the symptoms start to surface.
- **Inflammation takes time:** Injuries such as sprains or herniated discs develop as swelling increases over hours or days.
- **Brain trauma can be subtle:** Concussions may not affect you immediately. Brain fog, sleep issues, mood swings, and other issues could take time to become clear.
- **Emotional processing is delayed:** PTSD and anxiety often set in only after the shock fades. It may be days or weeks before you recognize the psychological impact.

What happens if you didn't see a doctor right away?

Not seeing a doctor immediately after a car accident is not the end of your case. However, insurance companies often use delays in treatment as a reason to question your claim. They may argue that you weren't really hurt, your injuries came from something else, or you waited too long to seek care.

The best way to protect yourself is to see a doctor as soon as possible. The sooner you seek treatment, the stronger the connection between your injury and the crash becomes. A medical record is your best evidence.

However, if you didn't go right away, don't panic. What matters is that you take action once symptoms arise. A Maine car accident lawyer can explore every avenue to build a strong case on your behalf.

What does Maine law say about car accident injury claims?

Maine is a fault state when it comes to car accidents. That means if another driver caused your crash, their insurance is responsible for your injuries, even if those injuries show up days later.

You can pursue compensation for delayed injuries as long as they can be linked to the crash. Maine's statute of limitations is generous: you generally have six years from the date of the

accident to file your claim. However, evidence can disappear quickly and witnesses can forget specific details. So, it's best to contact a lawyer as soon as possible.

Additionally, comparative negligence applies in Maine car accident cases. If you were partly at fault, your compensation may be reduced by your percentage of fault. However, you can still recover damages as long as you were less than 50% at fault.

How do I prove a delayed-onset injury?

Insurance companies aren't in the business of taking your word for it. They'll lowball your settlement or deny your compensation if given the opportunity. To get the compensation you deserve, you need to document everything from the very beginning. Here's what helps:

- **Medical documentation:** Doctor's notes, test results, diagnoses, and treatment plans help show your injury is real and connected to the crash.
- **Timeline of symptoms:** Keep a journal of when your symptoms started and how they've changed. Include pain levels, limitations, and how the injury affects your daily life.
- **Statements from others:** If friends, family, or coworkers noticed changes in your behavior or abilities after the car accident, their observations can support your claim.

These cases often boil down to credibility and proof. The more evidence you have showing a clear timeline and diagnosis, the harder it is for insurance companies to deny your injury.

What if the insurance company offers a quick settlement?

Be careful. A quick offer might seem like a good deal, but it's often a tactic. Insurance companies know that delayed injuries exist. They want you to settle before you realize how bad things really are. Once you sign a release of liability, you can't go back and ask for more.

That's why it's smart to wait until you know the full extent of your injuries. You should also get medical evaluations and second opinions if needed and speak with an attorney before signing anything. A Maine car accident lawyer can determine the full value of your claim.

What types of compensation can I recover after a car accident in Maine?

If your delayed-onset injury is related to the crash, you may be entitled to compensation for:

- **Medical expenses:** This includes hospital visits, follow-up care, imaging tests, therapy, and even surgery.
- **Lost wages:** If you've missed work or can't return to your job, you may be eligible for reimbursement for lost wages or future earning capacity.

- **Pain and suffering:** You can get compensated for ongoing physical pain, mental anguish, or reduced quality of life.

Don't let the insurance companies get the advantage. Contact us today!

If you've been hurt in a car accident in Maine, you're probably dealing with more than just physical pain. The medical bills start stacking up, work becomes impossible, and suddenly you're getting calls from insurance adjusters who seem more interested in closing your case than actually helping you.

The attorneys at [Romanow Law Group](#) get it. We've helped so many people who were in your exact position. Our attorneys have extensive knowledge of Maine's laws. Our legal team knows how to investigate car accidents. We fight to hold negligent parties accountable and negotiate for maximum compensation.

When you work with us, you don't pay anything upfront. We work on a contingency fee basis, which means we only get paid if we win your case. That means no out-of-pocket costs and no surprises. The next step is simple: [contact us online](#) or call us for a free, no-obligation consultation. We'll sit down with you, listen to your story, and walk you through your options. If you're too injured to travel, we'll come to you.

"This was my first time using a personal injury lawyer, and there wouldn't be anybody else I would choose if I ever had to do it again. Truly good people." – B.C., ☆☆☆☆☆