

Cervical Radiculopathy

Patient Information

MSK Therapy Services

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Introduction

Cervical radiculopathy (ra·dic·u·lop·a·thy) is the technical term for when a nerve in your neck gets irritated. It can cause pain, numbness, tingling, or weakness. Neck pain does not mean you have a pinched nerve, although it may be present. It is often called a 'trapped nerve'. The exact site of the pain depends on which nerve is involved, but pain can be felt all the way down the arm.

Aims

A Physiotherapist will assess you to determine where the pain is coming from, and will give you exercises specifically tailored to address the problem. Other treatments will be discussed where appropriate.

If your symptoms have just begun they are likely to settle fully within 6-12 weeks. If your pain is severe, you may want to speak to your GP about appropriate pain relief specifically for nerve pain.

Exercises can be helpful in resolving an episode of cervical radiculopathy. We advise trying to maintain movement in your neck and in the nerves down your arm. Heat and/or ice can be helpful in managing your symptoms, and your Physiotherapist will discuss this with you.

Risks

It is important to monitor your symptoms, and seek urgent medical attention if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Weakness that is worsening
- Severe numbness that is worsening
- Loss of control of bladder or bowels (extreme and unlikely, but something to be mindful of)
- Fever not explained by flu or known infection, such as a bladder infection
- Severe, unremitting pain which does not improve with analgesia or rest.

Benefits

Starting exercises early can be helpful in speeding up your recovery, as can taking pain relief if prescribed by your GP, or over the counter medication recommended by a Pharmacist. The worst thing you can do is keep your neck still and not move, this will make future movements more painful and mean daily tasks will be difficult to carry out.

References:

<https://www.webmd.com/pain-management/pain-management-cervical-radiculopathy>
<https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/neck-pain-cervical-radiculopathy/><https://www.csp.org.uk/publications/neck-pain-exercises>

Please use this space to write notes or reminders.

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

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Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



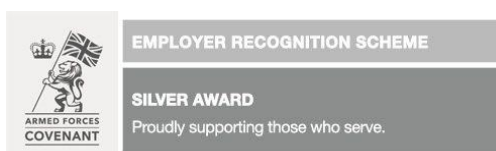
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This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in the department/ward.

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