Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Cervical Radiculopathy

Version number: **2**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Cervical Radiculopathy

Patient Information

MSK Therapy Services

Author ID: AY

Leaflet Ref: Tpy 010

Version: 2

Leaflet title: Cervical Radiculopathy

Last review: August 2025

Expiry Date: August 2027

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



Version number: **2**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

All rights reserved © 2026
WWL Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust