



General Info About Cervical Spondylosis

The area, which are commonly affected by Cervical Spondylosis are from the fourth to seventh vertebral bones. The discs present in between the two vertebrae loses height due to ageing or degeneration or sometimes due to injury.

In cervical spondylosis the ligament of the joints become thick and shortened. The disc space becomes narrow and gradually compresses the nerve. In advanced cases of Cervical Spondylosis, spinal cord is affected and may also lead to paralysis of the arm.

Who are commonly prone to cervical spondylosis?

- It is common in middle-aged people.
- Women are affected more than men.

What are the causes of Cervical Spondylosis?

- 1.Injury
- 2.Bad posture
- 3.Occupational strain
- 4.Body type
- 5.Life style

What is bad posture that can cause cervical spondylosis ?

- The head is held forwards from normal position.
- The shoulders are held up and forward.
- The chest is bent and rounded.
- The pelvic area is tilted backwards.
- The hips, knees and ankles are bent.

Occupational strain

The physical discomfort, which arises through an occupation is occupational stress. The physical strain, intensity of work and duration of working hours all constitutes the occupational strain.

Life style

The various styles of activity adapted in daily life can cause strain or tear of the structures of the neck and lead to cervical spondylosis. An example is awkward Positions adapted while sleeping.

Body type

Body type also predisposes cervical spondylosis

- Thick necks with hump at the back
- Long backs

These body types are more prone to cause strain or tear of the neck tissues.

What are the symptoms of Cervical Spondylosis?

Pain
Neck pain
Shoulder pain
Headache
Muscle tightness

The muscles covering the regions like back of neck shoulder , side of neck will be stiff and painful.

Referred pain

There may be no pain felt over the neck but referred pain maybe present in arm, elbow, thumb and fingers.

Limitation of movement

The neck movements are limited. Extending the neck up is difficult and restricted due to pain and stiffness, but flexing the neck down is possible.

Loss of bladder and bowel control. In extremely severe cases, if the spinal cord is affected, there will be loss of balance and also loss of bladder and bowel control.

Muscle weakness

The muscles responsible for maintaining the neck in erect position can become weak.

Sensory loss

The bones of the neck applies pressure over the nerves passing through them and can causes loss of sensation in the arm or fingers.

General tiredness and anxiety - can be present.

How is Cervical Spondylosis diagnosed?

The doctor will first ask a few pertinent questions and then examine the normal aligned position of the neck and will then perform certain special tests and X-rays if he suspects this condition.

What is treatment for Cervical Spondylosis?

1. Medical
2. Physiotherapy
3. Relaxation
4. Lifestyle Modifications
5. Ergonomics
6. Do's and Dont's

Medical Treatment

Usually Analgesics and muscle relaxants are advised . In more severe cases the orthopaedic doctor may suggest cortisone injections near the joints of the vertebral bodies to ease the swelling of the nerves and relieve pain.

Surgical Treatment

If the medical treatment and physiotherapy fails, and the condition is severe, where the nerves are affected, surgery may be required.. Decompression of the nerve is done to relieve the nerve which is compressed by the bones and the disc.

Shortwave Diathermy - A disc or heating pad is placed over the back of the neck. The warmth obtained from the shortwave diathermy current relaxes the muscle and the pain is relieved.

Cervical Traction - Traction is a mechanical device, which supports the head and chin. It is used to relieve the nerve compression by a bone.

Posture correction - Simple postural exercises can be taught to correct the faulty position of the neck.

Relaxation

Relaxation is essential part of treatment. Tension in neck and shoulder muscle, pain, anxiety are all relieved by relaxation.

Relaxation can be done in two ways:

Physical Relaxation.

Mental Relaxation.

Physical Relaxation:

The whole body is relaxed by free suitable and comfortable positions, so that the muscles are freed from tension and the pain is relieved. For eg., position of relaxation - when you are lying flat on your back.

One pillow under the head
One cushion for the shoulder and
One under knees.

The pillow should be firm and thin
This position will allow relaxation for your body while lying down.

Relaxation while sitting.

The head, neck and shoulder are supported by high backed chair, with a small pillow at lower back. Feet supported on stool or low bench. Arm, resting on arm of chair or pillow

6.Do's and Dont's

Mental Relaxation

Positive thinking and using imagination is the way of relaxing mentally. This type makes one feel better and breaks the pain cycle. Muscle tension, anxiety, loss of sleep and pain are all relieved by mental relaxation exercises like yoga.

Lifestyle Modifications

Some modifications in life style will help in over coming problems of cervical spondylosis. For example:-

Avoid any strain of neck and shoulder like reading and writing for long hours.

Avoid the use of very soft cushion bed and avoid using a very high pillow.

Ergonomics

Ergonomics concentrates on the architectural design of furnitures like desk, chairs, tables etc. The design of the furniture should be such that it should support the body structure without causing any undue strain to the muscles of the back and neck

Do's and Dont's

- If you are prone to cervical spondylosis, Avoid bad roads, if travelling by two or four wheelers:
- Do not sit for prolonged period of time in stressful postures
- Do use firm collars while traveling.
- Do not lift heavy weights on head or back
- Do not turn from your body but turn your body moving your feet first
- Do turn to one side while getting up from lying down
- Do the exercises prescribed regularly
- Do use firm mattress, thin pillow or butterfly shaped pillow
- Do not lie flat on your stomach.