



Cervical Radiculopathy

The Horder Centre
HORDER HEALTHCARE

What is it?

Pain in the arm +/- neck pain that typically presents with pins and needles and/or numbness, possible weakness and runs in a pattern specific to a nerve coming from the neck.

Could it be something else? Sometimes people can have these symptoms and it could be linked to issues unrelated to the neck. This could be musculoskeletal for example, originating from the shoulder, elbow, hand/wrist region or from a neurological source. If this is not clear, your GP will likely assess you and may refer you to a Physiotherapist or Advanced Practitioner.

Who gets it?

Most commonly people between the age of 50-54 with higher likelihood of it affecting men rather than women, but it can happen at any stage of your life

Will it get better?

Six out of ten patients can get better spontaneously by six weeks, while seven to eight out of 10 patients will feel better by three months. (British Association of Spinal Surgeons, BASS, 2021)

When should I seek help?

- If your pain is not improving with appropriate pain relief.
 - This should be reviewed with your GP and may include over the counter relief, neuropathic drugs or muscle relaxants. This is at the discretion of your GP and will be decided by them with close review of your other health conditions and risk factors.
- If symptoms deteriorate, especially weakness in the arm i.e. dropping things or losing ability to do movements with your hand

- If your symptoms are occurring on both arms and/or you are also having some leg symptoms, this may have other causes
 - If you show signs of cervical myelopathy/spinal cord compression, this is a medical emergency. Please see box below:

Early warning signs of spinal cord compression:

- Clumsiness in arms or legs.
- Heaviness or weakness of arms or legs - you may have trouble grasping and holding on to items.
- Pins and needles in arms and or legs.
- Patches of numbness in arms, legs or trunk.
- Loss of fine motor skills - you may have difficulty with handwriting, buttoning clothes, picking up coins or feeding yourself.
- Changes in your bowel or bladder control.
- Feeling more unsteady with walking.

If you experience any combination of these symptoms please attend your local A&E service urgently.

Will I need a scan?

As most people improve naturally or with assistance of a physiotherapist, most people will not need a scan or any other investigations.

If symptoms don't improve with any of the above or it is unclear what is causing/contributing to your symptoms a clinician may want to explore further investigations if this is clinically indicated and will significantly change your management.

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If you think you have these symptoms, you can book in for a 1:1 assessment with a Physiotherapist.

Physiotherapy Bookings
01892 601466 or email
physiobookings@horder.co.uk

Registered Office | St. John's Road, Crowborough, East Sussex
TN6 1XP |
01892 665577

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