

CERVICAL SPONDYLOSIS



CERVICAL SPONDYLOSIS



Cervical spondylosis is a general term for age-related wear and tear affecting the spinal disks in your neck.

As the disks dehydrate and shrink, signs of osteoarthritis develop, including bony projections along the edges of bones (bone spurs).

Cervical spondylosis is very common and worsens with age. More than 85% of people older than age 60 are affected by cervical spondylosis.

For most people, cervical spondylosis causes no symptoms. When symptoms do occur, nonsurgical treatments often are effective.

Risk Factors



- Age
- Occupation
- Neck injury
- Genetic factors
- Smoking
- Being overweight & inactive

Causes



Dehydrated disks

Disks act like cushions between the vertebrae of the spine. By the age of 40, most people's spinal disks begin drying out and shrinking.

Herniated disks

Cracks also appear on the exterior of the spinal disks. The soft interior of a disk can squeeze through these cracks. Sometimes, it presses on the spinal cord and nerve roots.

Bone spurs

As the disks break down, the body may produce extra amounts of bone in a misguided effort to strengthen the spine. These bone spurs can sometimes pinch the spinal cord and nerve roots.

Stiff ligaments

Ligaments are cords of tissue that connect bone to bone. Spinal ligaments can stiffen with age, making the neck less flexible.

Symptoms

Most people with cervical spondylosis don't have significant symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they can range from mild to severe and may develop gradually or occur suddenly.

Pain, usually around the shoulder blade. Some complain of pain along the arm and fingers, which may increase when standing, sitting, sneezing, coughing, or tilting your neck.

Basic Investigations

- Physical exam
- X-rays - to check for bone spurs and other abnormalities
- CT scan
- MRI scan
- A nerve conduction study checks the speed and strength of the signals a nerve sends. This is done by placing electrodes on your skin where the nerve is located.

Treatment Options



- Physical therapy

- Medications: muscle relaxants, narcotics for pain relief, steroid injections, and NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)

- Surgery is rarely necessary for cervical spondylosis. However, a doctor may recommend it if the pain is severe and it's affecting your ability to move your arms.