

Cervical Stenosis and Myelopathy



What are cervical stenosis and myelopathy?



Cervical stenosis is narrowing of the canal in your neck which contains the spinal cord. The term 'cervical' in this context refers to the cervical vertebrae which make up the neck. Cervical stenosis usually occurs as a result of age-related changes to the spine and is common, even in people with no symptoms. If the narrowing occurs to the extent that it causes pressure on the spinal cord, it can result in compression of the spinal cord which can affect its function. This is termed 'myelopathy'.

Symptoms

Myelopathy can cause any of the following symptoms

- Numb, clumsy hands (pins and needles or a 'fizzing' feeling)
- A sensation of 'heaviness' in the legs
- Inability to walk at a hurried pace
- Balance issues (such as unsteadiness and stumbling when walking or knocking into things – rather like if you were 'drunk')
- Difficulty with fine motor skills (such as handwriting or buttoning a shirt)
- Myelopathy is often not painful in itself but some people experience intermittent 'electric shock' type pains into the spine, arms and/or legs especially when bending their head forward. The age-related changes in the neck may also cause neck and/or arm pain.

There are a number of other conditions which can cause the symptoms above, so it is important to seek assessment from a healthcare professional, like a GP or specialist physiotherapist in order to determine the best course of action.

<p>Working in partnership Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust</p>	<p>Follow Wiltshire Health and Care on social media:</p> <div style="text-align: center;">   </div> <p style="text-align: right;">@WiltsHC_NHS Wiltshire Health and Care</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.wiltshirehealthandcare.nhs.uk</p>
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Diagnosis

Symptoms suggestive of myelopathy warrant assessment by a spinal specialist in order to identify the condition. Physical examination can be helpful in this and MRI may be required to confirm diagnosis if myelopathy is suspected.

Prognosis

Without medical intervention, symptoms of myelopathy may remain unchanged for years. However, difficulties with coordination may suddenly increase, without any way of predicting when this might happen. In severe cases myelopathy can cause paralysed arms and legs.

Treatment

If you are confirmed to have myelopathy, surgical options are often considered in order to prevent worsening of symptoms. For further information about cervical stenosis, myelopathy and surgical intervention, please visit the British Association of Spinal Surgeons' website:

<https://spinesurgeons.ac.uk/resources/Documents/Booklets/FINAL-01382-19-Cervical-Stenosis-and-Myelopathy-Surgical-Options.pdf>

Further Information

More extensive information and support can be found on the following website:
<https://myelopathy.org/>

Below are the telephone numbers for the Community Outpatient Physiotherapy departments. Please call your local department for any further information/guidance;

Chippenham	01249 456451
Devizes	01380 732520
Malmesbury	01666 827583
Melksham	01225 701027
Salisbury	01722 336262 Ext 4425/4413
Savernake	01672 517310
Trowbridge	01225 711341
Warminster	01985 22471

Safeguarding

Wiltshire Health and Care has a strong commitment to care that is safe, of a high quality and that upholds our patients' rights. All our patients have the right to live lives free from abuse or neglect and, where they are able, to make or be supported to make informed decisions and choices about their treatment, care and support. Where patients are not able to make their own decisions, Wiltshire Health and Care staff are committed to ensuring that treatment, care and support is undertaken in accordance with the person's best interests. In order to fulfil these commitments, Wiltshire Health and Care follow the Safeguarding principles and responsibilities laid out in Sections 42-46 of the Care Act (2014) and are informed by, and apply, the guiding principles and provisions of the Mental Capacity Act (2005).

If you or your carer have any concerns about abuse, neglect or your rights in relation to care provided by Wiltshire Health and Care or any other agency or individual, please raise this directly with any Wiltshire Health and Care staff or contact the Safeguarding Adults Team by telephone on: 0300 4560111.

Regarding children, WHC is responsible for providing services in accordance with Section 11 of the Children's Act (1989) and works under the principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any questions, or concerns, suggestions or compliments about our service, please speak to a member of staff.

This information sheet is available in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 0300 1237797 and PALS.wiltshirehealthandcare@nhs.net

Patient and Public Involvement

We value your opinions which will help us to further develop our services.

If you wish to provide feedback or get involved in our patient participation groups, please email the Patient and Public Involvement Officer at ask.wiltshirehealthandcare@nhs.net or telephone 01249 454386.