

Cervical Myelopathy information sheet including warning signs

It is common as you get older to have age related changes in your neck and for most people this does not cause any problems. However, in a small percentage of people this progresses and causes pressure on the spinal cord, known as degenerative cervical myelopathy.

Other forms of cervical myelopathy may occur in adults at any age, although this occurs less frequently than the degenerative type.

You need to be aware of the symptoms of this condition so that you can seek timely medical assessment if they were to occur. If the condition was to be left untreated it could cause permanent nerve damage with lifelong symptoms as listed below and in some cases paralysis.

Symptoms of cervical myelopathy may include:

- Neck pain and stiffness with pain in arms and/or legs
- Arms and/or legs becoming weak, numb or tingly
- Loss of control for fine movement of the hands such as doing up buttons or picking up coins
- Imbalance/unsteadiness on walking
- Changes to bladder function such as urgency to pass urine, difficulty passing urine or incontinence
- Changes to bowel function such as incontinence

If you notice you have gradually developed any of the symptoms from the list above, then please discuss with your GP or physiotherapist as a priority.

If you develop rapid deterioration of the above symptoms seek emergency medical attention.

If you have any questions about the information above please speak to your physiotherapist at your next appointment or call us on 0300 555 0123.