



NECK PAIN

Pain in the neck can be due to injury, a mechanical or muscular problem or a nerve irritation. The pain can range from very mild discomfort to severe, burning pain.

If the pain is acute - sudden and intense - it is likely to be a 'wry neck', where the small joints at the side of the spine (facet joints) become irritated. If the pain has lasted more than three months, it is termed chronic neck pain.

Any number of incidents can cause the neck pain, including:

- Degeneration of the vertebrae in the spine
- Worry and stress
- Falling asleep in an awkward position
- Prolonged & improper use of a computer keyboard/mouse
- Motor vehicle accident
- Contact sports

Neck pain is generally pain located in the local area, either on both sides, or on one side only. There may be stiffness in the joints of the spine, and possibly tightness of the neck muscles. Pain may radiate down to the shoulder or between the shoulder blades. Occasionally it can travel further down one arm, and may even cause tingling in the fingers.

Even when neck pain is very severe it is rarely due to a serious disease, and you can still recover quickly. The spine is extremely strong, and very difficult to damage. Most neck pain comes from the muscles, ligaments and joints in your spine, but in most people we cannot identify the exact source of pain. X-rays are not particularly helpful in identifying what is wrong –the changes seen on x-ray are normal changes that come with age.

The best approach to neck pain is to get it moving, to do exercises, and to keep fit. We now know movement is better for it than rest.

Physiotherapy can be extremely beneficial when managing neck pain. A physiotherapist can provide you with advice on your posture and exercises. They can also perform manual treatment on your joints and muscles, to help restore normal movement and reduce pain.

Ways to help manage Neck pain:

- Do regular neck exercises to help keep the joints and muscles moving
- Take pain relief if needed (speak to your GP or pharmacist to find the most appropriate medication for you)
- Be aware of your posture and find ways to improve it
- Take regular breaks from repetitive activities that may be contributing to your symptoms
- Reduce stress and tension. These often contribute to neck problems
- Try gentle heat to ease the muscle tension that accompanies a lot of neck pain
- Purchase a supportive pillow, that can help maintain a good posture at night
- Don't panic! Remember , most neck pain resolves quickly and easily

The Physiotherapists at the White House have many years of experience in helping people with neck pain. Book an appointment today if you need any advice or treatment.

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