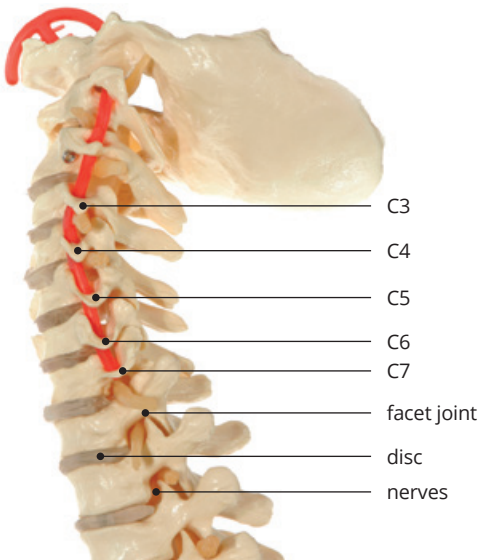


Neck Pain

Studies and surveys showed that the prevalence of neck pain among people being surveyed was as high as 65%. Because of the neck pain some had to reduce their social activities and limit their work.



Anatomy of the neck

Anatomy of the neck

The neck has seven bones that form the cervical (neck) vertebrae. Doctors refer to these areas as C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6 and C7.

Between the bone segments sit the discs, which are fibrous tissues and act as shock absorbers. The discs allow the neck to move.

When the discs change shape (a herniated disc) or move out of position (a slipped disc), symptoms of pain may manifest.

There are also nerves branching from the spinal cord to all parts of the body. Pain may result if these nerves are compressed by displaced discs.

Signs and symptoms

Neck pain is very common. Depending on its cause and the degree of severity, the pain may manifest in different parts of the body, and may trigger other symptoms:

- Tension, pain and / or stiffness around the neck and upper back
- Radiated pain, or a tingling feeling, that is felt in the arm or hand
- Numbness or weakness in the neck, arms or shoulders
- Dizziness or light headedness, nausea or headache

Common causes of neck pain

Neck pain can be acute or chronic, and may be caused by certain types of activities or injuries to the neck region, or by other medical conditions.

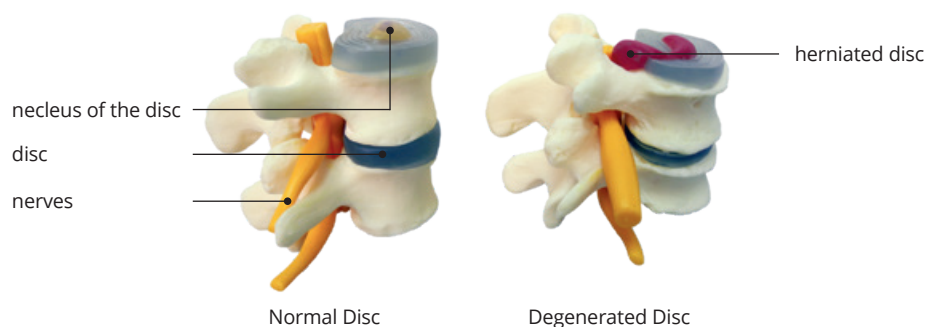
Acute neck pain

Wry neck - Muscle strain or soft tissue injuries can lead to a wry neck, which triggers neck pain immediately. A wry neck will restrict the normal range of head motion. Such symptoms usually present themselves during sleep or a slight turn of the head, or after an injury. A wry neck can also be related to other medical conditions such as a herniated disc or a slipped disc.

Car accidents - A traumatic force, such as that created in a car accident, may strain the nerves, ligaments and muscles in the cervical area, causing pain.

Chronic neck pain

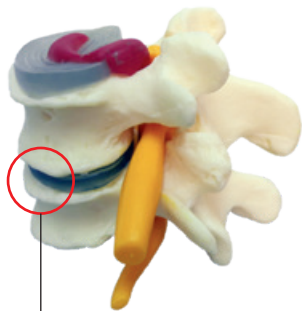
Disc degeneration - Accumulated wear and tear on the disc may lead to neck pain. Degeneration of the disc is age-related, and is worsened by poor posture and repetitive movement of the neck.



The following medical conditions can also lead to chronic neck pain:

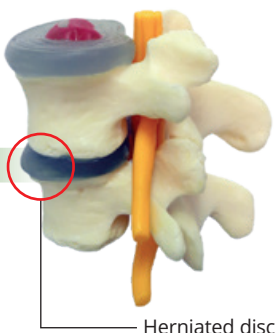
Cervical spondylosis

- The wear and tear of soft tissues, the vertebrae or discs in the neck, leading to the gradual narrowing of the disc space, and affecting the shape of the vertebrae. Bone spurs may form along the edges of the vertebrae and impinge on nerves or the spinal cord, causing pain.



Herniated disc in the neck

- Disc degeneration, or an injury, can cause the discs to be pushed out or ruptured, irritating the nerves and causing pain.
- Depending on the severity, the condition can lead to sensory and motor function impairment.



Cervicogenic headache

Neck pain may lead to cervicogenic headache, a referred pain which stems from the neck region. This type of headache usually affects one side of the head, with pain starting from the back of the neck and travelling to the forehead and/or temporal area. People sometimes experience both neck pain and a headache, especially after a car accident or other types of physical trauma, or from developing arthritis.

How to alleviate neck pain?

People suffering from acute and chronic neck pain should be examined by a doctor as soon as possible. For mild pain, rest and ice pack will usually be enough to manage the pain and stabilize the neck. In addition, patients can consult physiotherapists, who will evaluate the body posture and joint movement, and give appropriate advice.

Bed rest

- Lying down will decrease the pressure to the neck, thus reducing muscle spasm, and promoting healing.
- Any lifting or physical exertion should be avoided.
- In early stage of acute pain, a neck collar may be recommended to provide support and to stabilize the neck.

Ice or heat

- An ice pack is usually applied for acute injuries like neck sprain or whiplash. Meanwhile, a heat pack is applied to alleviate neck pain caused by muscle spasms.

Work ergonomics modification

- Modification of work station is necessary if poor posture is the cause of the neck pain. Adjustments should be made to avoid overstraining certain muscle groups.

Choice of pillow and mattress

- The pillow and mattress should be of appropriate thickness and softness for adequate support to the spine. Good mattresses and pillows should maintain a normal spinal curve when lying on the back or side.

When to seek medical help?

Anyone who has these signs or symptoms should seek medical advice either by a doctor or a physiotherapist:

- When neck pain persists for a few days and causes disruption to sleep
- Constant numbness and increasing weakness in arms or hands
- Constant headache with increasing severity
- Fever, chills, sweats as this may indicate an underlying medical condition

Treatment options

Medication

- Medication such as anti-inflammatory drugs may be prescribed to relieve neck pain related to inflammation. Other medications, for example, muscle relaxants are used to settle down muscle spasm. This is useful in relieving pain in the acute stage.

Physiotherapy

- You may be referred to have physiotherapy treatment. The physiotherapist will assess the condition and provide appropriate remedies including:
 - **Postural correction**
 - **Manual therapy** - joint mobilization and soft tissue release
 - **Exercise therapy** - stretching, deep neck muscle and shoulder control exercises
 - **Electrotherapy** - ultrasound, Interferential therapy for soft tissue healing and pain control
 - **Advice on work ergonomics**
 - **Acupuncture**



Surgical interventions

- The doctor may advise further diagnostic examinations, such as a MRI scan. If the condition does not improve after medication and physiotherapy, surgical treatments may be considered.
- Surgeons may recommend a minimally invasive surgery to remove the intruded part of the herniated disc, a disc replacement or fusion for stabilization of the neck joints.

Compiled by:

Physiotherapy Department,
Matilda International Hospital

References:

UpToDate website

The materials contained here are for general health information only, and are not intended to replace the advice of a doctor. Matilda International Hospital and Matilda Medical Centre will not be liable for any decisions the reader makes based on this material.

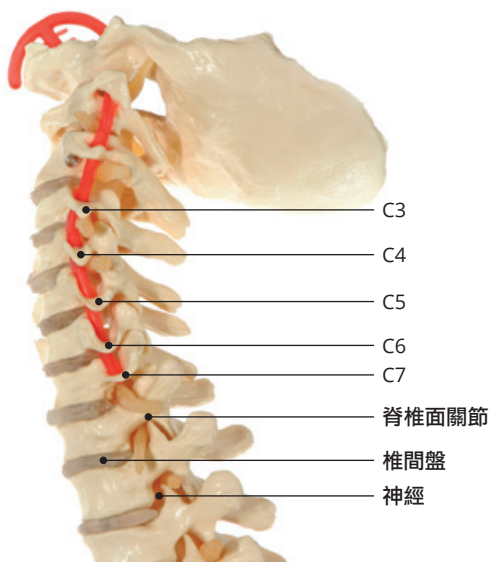
To make a physiotherapy appointment,
please call 2849 0760 or email physio@matilda.org.

Scan the QR code to obtain
information of our medical
centre or clinic downtown



頸痛

有研究及調查顯示，高達六成五的受訪者表示曾出現頸痛，部分受訪者更由於頸痛而要減少社交活動和減少工作。



頸部結構

頸部結構

頸部由七節頸椎骨組成。醫生一般會以C1、C2、C3、C4、C5、C6和C7來解釋這七節頸椎骨的位置。

頸椎骨之間以椎間盤分隔。椎間盤是一種纖維組織，有助吸收活動時所產生的震盪，並讓身體活動。

當椎間盤的形狀改變(椎間盤滑脫)或移位(椎間盤突出)，就可能會出現疼痛的症狀。

頸椎包著脊髓神經，而脊髓神經的分支經椎間孔伸延至身體各部分。若這些神經線被頸椎骨或椎間盤擠壓，患者或可能感到痛楚。

症狀

頸痛十分常見。頸痛可以由不同成因引起，嚴重程度也有所差異，以致令頸部或身體其他不同位置感到痛楚，或引發其他症狀：

- 頸部及上背周圍的肌肉繃緊、疼痛和/或僵硬
- 手臂或手掌感到放射般的疼痛或刺痛
- 頸、手或肩膀麻痺或無力
- 頭暈目眩、噁心或頭痛

頸痛的常見成因

頸痛分為急性或慢性，可能是由於頸部受傷，或某些活動或身體其他毛病所引起。

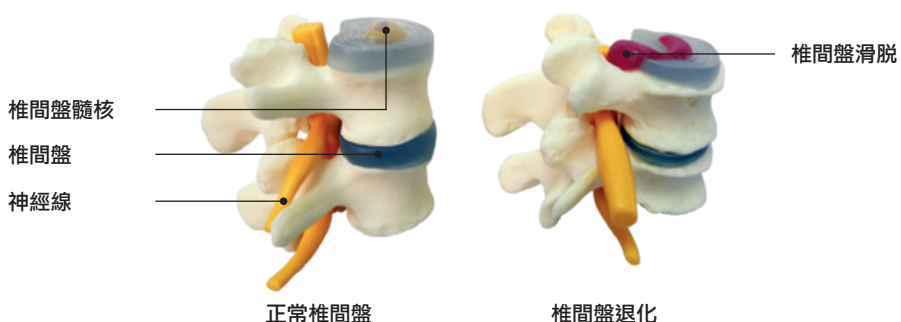
急性頸痛

斜頸：肌肉勞損或軟組織受損可導致斜頸，繼而立即引起頸痛。斜頸會影響頸部正常的活動範圍，通常會在睡眠、頸部輕微轉動或受傷後出現。斜頸亦可能與其他身體毛病有關，如椎間盤滑脫或椎間盤突出等。

車禍：具創傷性的衝力，如兩車相撞，可能會拉傷頸部神經、韌帶和肌肉，而引致痛楚。

慢性頸痛

椎間盤退化：椎間盤勞損可能會導致頸痛。椎間盤勞損與年老退化有關，而姿勢不良和經常重複一些頸部動作，也會令情況惡化。



正常椎間盤

椎間盤退化

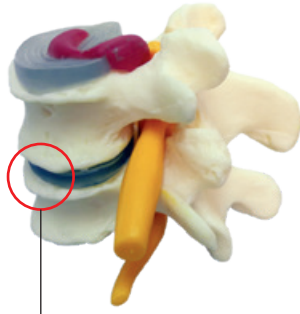
以下的身體毛病亦可導致慢性頸痛：

頸椎關節炎

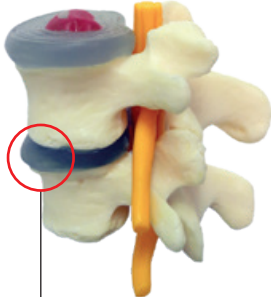
- 當頸骨的軟組織、頸椎或椎間盤出現勞損，除了可能會逐漸收窄椎間盤的空間、影響頸椎的形狀外，骨頭的末端亦會長出新的骨骼及軟骨組織，稱為骨刺，並有機會壓著附近的神經線或脊髓而產生痛楚。

頸部椎間盤滑脫

- 椎間盤退化或損傷可導致椎間盤被擠壓或破裂，繼而刺激神經、引起痛楚。
- 若椎間盤嚴重受損，可能會影響四肢的感覺和活動功能。



頸椎關節炎



頸部椎間盤滑脫

頸椎性頭痛

頸椎性頭痛屬於轉移痛楚，是由於頸部毛病所致。這種頭痛通常影響頭部的其中一邊，痛楚會從後頸一直伸延到額頭和/或太陽穴位置。患者有時會同時感到頸痛和頭痛，尤其是經歷車禍或其他創傷後，或患有關節炎。

如何舒緩頸痛？

急性頸痛的患者應儘快求醫及檢查。症狀輕微者，充足的休息及使用冰袋冰敷可舒緩痛楚和穩定頸部，此外，亦可諮詢物理治療師。物理治療師將評估患者的關節活動及提出治療方案。

休息

- 臥躺可減輕頸部的壓力，從而減少肌肉痙攣，有助康復。
- 應避免提舉重物或進行費力的活動。
- 急性頸痛的初期，或會建議使用頸箍，以支撐和穩定頸部，減輕對軟組織的壓力。

冷敷或熱敷

- 冰袋通常用作冷敷突發性拉傷或扭傷的部位。熱敷則可用來舒緩肌肉痙攣而引起的頸痛。

根據人體工學糾正姿勢

- 若不良姿勢是頸痛的原因，就必須改善姿勢，以及調較工作崗位的座椅和電腦高度等，以避免肌肉過分操勞。

選擇適合的枕頭和床墊

- 枕頭和床墊應有適當的厚度和軟度，以充分支撐脊椎。當平躺或側躺時，枕頭和床墊可幫助保持正常的脊椎曲線。

何時需看醫生或物理治療師？

- 頸痛持續數天，影響睡眠的質素
- 手臂或手掌出現持續痲痺和變得越來越軟弱無力
- 頭痛持續加劇
- 發燒、發冷、出汗，因為這些症狀可能顯示身體潛在的其他毛病

治療方法

藥物

- 醫生或處方消炎藥，以減輕與發炎有關的頸痛。其他藥物如肌肉鬆弛劑也可用來控制肌肉痙攣的情況。這些藥物能有效舒緩急性頸痛。

物理治療

- 醫生可轉介病人接受物理治療。物理治療師會評估病人的病情，並提供適當的治療，包括

- 改善姿勢**
- 徒手治療**—物理治療以徒手治療的手法幫助患者活動關節及放鬆軟組織
- 運動療法**—伸展運動、頸部深層肌肉運動和控制肩膀的運動
- 電療**—超聲波、干擾波治療，以幫助修復軟組織和控制痛楚
- 根據人體工學糾正姿勢**
- 針灸**



手術治療

- 醫生可能會建議病人接受進一步檢查，如磁力共振掃描。病人接受藥物和物理治療而病情沒有得以改善，則可能需要手術治療。
- 外科醫生可能建議以微創手術切除突出的椎間盤，或接受頸椎人工椎間盤置換術或融合手術，以固定頸部關節。

撰寫：
明德國際醫院物理治療部

參考資料：
UpToDate 網站

此健康單張所提供的資訊僅供參考之用，並不能取代醫生的專業意見。明德國際醫院及明德醫療中心對讀者在閱讀後所作出的任何決定並不負上任何責任。

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請致電 2849 0760 或電郵 physio@matilda.org。

掃描以下QR Code，
查閱醫院位於市區的
醫療中心或診所資料

