

Cervical Spondylosis Overview - Bombay Spine Clinic

- Cervical Spondylosis

What Is It?

- Cervical Spondylosis refers to age-related wear and tear of the cervical spine (neck). Over time, the intervertebral discs lose water content and elasticity, while the joints, ligaments and bones of the neck undergo degenerative changes. These changes may lead to neck pain, stiffness, nerve compression or, in advanced cases, spinal cord compression.
- Cervical spondylosis is a common condition and becomes increasingly prevalent with age. While many individuals may have degenerative changes on MRI or X-rays, not everyone develops symptoms.
- Common Symptoms
 - Patients may experience:
 - Neck pain or stiffness
 - Pain around the shoulders and upper back
 - Headaches originating from the neck
 - Reduced neck movements
 - Pain radiating into the arm
 - Tingling or numbness in the arm or hand
 - Weakness in the upper limbs
 - Difficulty with prolonged computer or desk work
 - In advanced cases involving spinal cord compression:
 - Hand clumsiness
 - Difficulty buttoning clothes
 - Frequent dropping of objects
 - Gait imbalance
 - Difficulty walking

Causes & Risk Factors

- Cervical spondylosis develops due to gradual degeneration of spinal structures.
- Common risk factors include:
 - Increasing age
 - Repetitive neck movements
 - Long-term desk work

- Poor posture
- Prolonged mobile phone use
- Previous neck injuries
- Smoking
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Genetic predisposition
- When Should You Seek Medical Advice?
- Medical evaluation is recommended if:
- Neck pain persists despite treatment

Symptoms recur frequently

- Pain radiates into the arm
- Tingling or numbness develops
- Weakness develops in the arm or hand
- Balance problems occur
- Hand coordination becomes affected
- Walking becomes difficult

Symptoms interfere with work, sleep or daily activities

- Early assessment is particularly important if symptoms suggest spinal cord involvement.
- How Is It Diagnosed?
- Clinical Examination
- A detailed neurological examination helps identify nerve or spinal cord involvement.
- X-Ray
- Can demonstrate age-related degeneration, disc space narrowing and alignment abnormalities.
- MRI
- MRI is the most useful investigation for evaluating:
- Disc degeneration
- Disc prolapse
- Nerve compression
- Spinal cord compression
- Canal stenosis
- CT Scan
- May be useful for detailed evaluation of bony structures.
- Blood Tests
- Usually not required unless infection, inflammatory disease or other medical conditions are suspected.

Treatment Options

- Non-Surgical Treatment
- Most patients improve without surgery.

Treatment may include:

- Activity modification
- Posture correction
- Physiotherapy
- Ergonomic workplace adjustments
- Neck strengthening exercises
- Medications
- Lifestyle modifications
- The goal is to reduce pain, improve function and prevent progression of symptoms.
- Surgical Treatment
- Surgery may be considered when:
- Significant nerve compression is present
- Progressive weakness develops

Symptoms fail to improve with conservative treatment

- Spinal cord compression (Cervical Myelopathy) is present
- Depending on the underlying pathology, surgical options may include:
- Cervical Decompression Surgery
- Cervical Discectomy
- Cervical Fusion Surgery
- Disc Replacement Surgery
- The choice of procedure depends on the patient's condition and imaging findings.

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Is cervical spondylosis a normal part of ageing?
- Yes. Degenerative changes are common with ageing, although not everyone develops symptoms.
- 2. Can cervical spondylosis be cured completely?
- The degenerative changes themselves cannot be reversed, but symptoms can often be managed effectively.
- 3. Does every patient with cervical spondylosis need surgery?
- No. Most patients improve with non-surgical treatment.
- 4. Can cervical spondylosis cause arm pain?
- Yes. Compression of cervical nerves may cause pain, tingling or numbness radiating into the arm.
- 5. What is cervical myelopathy?

- It refers to compression of the spinal cord in the neck and may cause hand clumsiness, balance problems and difficulty walking.
- 6. Is physiotherapy beneficial?
- Yes. Physiotherapy plays an important role in improving posture, mobility and muscle strength.
- 7. Can poor posture worsen symptoms?
- Yes. Poor posture and prolonged forward neck positioning can aggravate symptoms.
- 8. When should I worry about cervical spondylosis?

Symptoms such as weakness, loss of hand dexterity, gait imbalance or worsening neurological deficits require prompt evaluation.

- 9. Can I continue working with cervical spondylosis?
- Most patients can continue working with appropriate treatment, posture correction and ergonomic modifications.
- 10. Is MRI always necessary?
- Not always. MRI is generally recommended when symptoms persist, neurological symptoms develop or surgery is being considered.
- Related Conditions
- Neck Sprain / Cervical Strain
- Trapezitis
- Slip Disc (Cervical Disc Herniation)
- Cervical Myelopathy
- Peripheral Neuropathy
- Lumbar Canal Stenosis
- When Should You Consult a Spine Specialist?
- If your neck pain is persistent, associated with arm symptoms, weakness, hand clumsiness, balance problems or progressive neurological symptoms, a consultation with a spine specialist can help establish an accurate diagnosis and determine the most appropriate treatment plan.
- Need Expert Advice?
- Book a consultation with Dr. Siddharth Katkade or upload your MRI/report for review through our Patient Resource Centre.

Need Clinical Evaluation or Second Opinion?

This educational document was prepared by **Dr. Siddharth Katkade**. For appointments or to share MRI scan reports for clinical review, call **+91 88507 73095** or consult at Byculla (E) / Khar (W) clinics.