



**Ask
Dr. Michael
The Pain Expert**



Dr. Michael Clifford

Cervical Radiculopathy

"I have pain in my neck and tingling in my hand and fingers. Sometimes my arm and shoulder hurts as well. What is causing this?" Nancy F.

The symptoms that you are describing are caused by a condition called cervical radiculopathy, in which compression of nerves exiting the cervical spine causes pain, numbness, tingling, and weakness along the nerve pathways into the extremities.

Causes of Cervical Radiculopathy

Cervical radiculopathy is caused by mechanical compression or irritation of nerves exiting the cervical spine. Common causes are disc herniation or a bone spur from joint degeneration or osteoarthritis, or from thickening of surrounding tissues and ligaments. In rare cases a tumor or infection can cause nerve compression and radiculopathy. In addition, inflammation from trauma or joint degeneration can cause direct irritation of the nerves leading to radiculopathy. Poor posture, repetitive activities, whiplash, sports injuries, and advancing cervical degenerative joint disease increase the risk of developing cervical radiculopathy.

Symptoms of Cervical Radiculopathy

Symptoms of cervical radiculopathy may include mild to severe pain in the neck, and one or both of the shoulders, arms, hands and fingers, as well as the upper back and shoulder blades. Numbness and tingling in the arms, hands and fingers is common, often in the absence of pain. Areas involved may also become sensitive and painful to light touch. Less commonly weakness in the muscles controlled by the affected nerves may develop, indicating nerve damage. Untreated, cervical radiculopathy may lead to chronic pain that degrades the quality of daily life.

Treatment for Cervical Radiculopathy

Treatment goals include soft tissue healing, pain relief and prevention, inflammation reduction, increased pain-free range of motion, and restoration of normal cervical curvature, joint function, and muscle strength. To achieve these goals, Haven employs a multi-disciplinary approach which includes interferential, ultrasound and far infrared therapies, myofascial stripping, trigger point therapy, exercises, stretching, and orthopaedic massage. In addition, chiropractic adjustments of subluxations of the cervical and thoracic spine restore normal curvature and vertebral biomechanical function, relieving causes of nerve compression and radicular symptoms. Anti-inflammatories and nutritional protocols are also helpful. In extreme cases surgery may be needed.

Dr. Michael Clifford is a U.S. Board Certified Chiropractic Physician, Physiotherapist and Chiropractic Sports Physician, and founder of *Haven Chiropractic Advanced Pain Relief and Family Wellness Care*. Galways Lane, Douglas, Cork.
havenchiropractic@aol.com www.havenchiropractic.ie.

Call today for a pain consultation. 021 485 7669