

Cervical Radiculopathy

Did you know?

The portion of the spine in the neck is called the cervical spine. There are 8 cervical nerve roots that exit the spine C1 to C8. The first nerve root in the thoracic spine T1 also contributes.

Each nerve root provides sensation to different areas of your arms, upper back, and upper chest. These nerve roots also connect to muscles in different areas of arm, upper back, and chest.

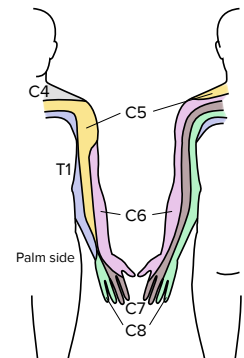
When these nerve roots get pinched by boney changes, arthritis, or bulging discs you can experience symptoms of a radiculopathy.

Risk Factors

- Arthritis
- Osteoporosis
- Degenerative disc disease
- Repetitive neck motions or vibrations
- Trauma such as car accidents
- Poor neck posture

Signs and Symptoms

- Numbness, pins and needles, pain, and electric shock sensation from the neck running down into the arm.
- Weakness in muscles supplied by the pinched nerve root. Thinning of muscles if the pinched nerve root is severe and chronic in nature.



Nerve Root	Areas of numbness	Areas of weakness
C5/6	Shoulder, bicep area, outer forearm, and thumb to pointer finger.	Shoulder movements, flexing your biceps, and wrist movements.
C7	Pain in shoulder blade region and backside of arm from triceps down toward the middle finger.	Elbow extension (pushing objects/ push ups), wrist movements, weakness in making a fist, and weakness in the back muscles.
C8/T1	Inside of the arm near armpit down towards the pinky finger.	Weakness in small muscles of hand (nail clippers, opening lids), spreading and extending the fingers.

Treatment

- *Usually a full recovery is possible with conservative management over 3–6 months.*
- Rest and avoiding activities which place neck under stress such as running, contact sports, and other activities that cause repetitive movement or vibration on the neck.
- Pain management with medications such as gabapentin, pregabalin, amitriptyline, and nortriptyline.
- Physiotherapy and safe exercise to strengthen muscles and improve posture once pain settles.
- If severe, surgery may be required and a referral to a surgeon will be needed.



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with patients
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