

# Cervical Spinal Stenosis and Cervical Myelopathy

## MSK Physiotherapy Patient information

### What is Cervical Spinal Stenosis?

**Cervical Spinal Stenosis** is when the space inside your neck bones (spinal canal) gets smaller. This space holds your spinal cord. Your spinal cord is a group of nerves that send messages between your brain and body.

The most common reason for this is changes that come with age. These changes can include:

- Bulging discs
- Small bony growths (called bone spurs)
- The soft tissues around the spine getting thicker

These changes are normal as we get older. They do not usually cause problems.

### Symptoms of Cervical Spinal Stenosis can include:

- Neck pain
- Pain in the shoulders, arms or hands
- Strange feelings like tingling or numbness
- Weakness in the arms or hands

### How is Cervical Spinal Stenosis managed?

There is no cure. But many people feel better with simple treatments. Most people with this condition can live normal lives.

Treatments might include:

- Physiotherapy (exercises and advice)
- Pain medicines
- Pain clinics
- Injections to help with pain

Sometimes, surgery may be offered if your symptoms are getting worse or not improving.

# Cervical Myelopathy

In more serious cases, the narrowing in your spine can press on your spinal cord. This pressure can cause damage to the nerves. This is called **myelopathy**.

## Signs of cervical myelopathy can include:

- Feeling heavy or weak in your arms or legs
- Difficulty doing small tasks like writing, doing up buttons, or picking up small things
- Tingling or pins and needles in your arms or legs
- Numb patches on your arms, legs or body
- Problems with walking, such as tripping or feeling unsteady
- In serious cases, you might notice changes in how your bladder or bowels work. You may also notice numbness in your private area.

## Myelopathy - When to get help

Contact us for an earlier appointment if:

- Your hands are getting weaker or clumsier.
- Your walking gets worse.

## You should go to your nearest Emergency Department if:

- you have new problems with your bladder or bowels.
- you have numbness or tingling in your genital area or around your bottom.

## Treatment for Cervical Myelopathy

Treatments might include:

- Physiotherapy (exercises and advice)
- Pain medicines
- Pain clinics
- Injections to help with pain

In serious cases, you may be referred to a spinal surgeon. Surgery is usually offered to **stop your symptoms getting worse**.

## Contact details:

### MSK Therapy Outpatients

Poole Hospital **0300 019 2121**

Christchurch Hospital **0300 019 4418**

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Poole Hospital, Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB  
Christchurch Hospital, Fairmile Road, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 2JX

Author: **Andrea Linser** Date: **October 2025** Version: **One** Review date: **October 2028** Ref: **095/25**