

Orthopaedic Connection

Neck Pain Unresponsive to Home Treatment

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Last time I closed by saying that if self care doesn't result in neck pain lessening in one or two weeks you may require further medical evaluation and treatment.

- If there is a history of an injury or a fall, a fracture or other structural damage must be ruled out
- Cervical disc herniation
- Cervical spondylosis (arthritis)
- Infection in the spine or associated tissues
- Tumor
- Throbbing neck pain could indicate a cardiovascular or heart problem
- Neck pain before or with a headache can be due to problems in arteries in the neck
- Arthritis in the neck
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Spinal stenosis

The conditions listed above are a list of the important causes of neck pain. Those listed are the more common ones we see in the office and hospital.

It would get too technical to be going over in detail all the more severe reasons that patients have neck pain.

You won't be missing anything important if you keep in mind that there is a list given above of conditions other than muscle spasm.

Methods of Diagnosis

As in any condition I treat, proper diagnosis starts with a careful history and thorough physical exam.

These two things are key and often I have a very good idea of what is going on even before I order plain x-rays of the neck.

Way too often I see patients in the office who have been referred to me and have already had an MRI of the neck, but no plain x-rays. I have

pointed out before that it is always proper to have plain x-rays done before even considering an MRI study. Often times I don't need an MRI, but if the patient comes to me and hasn't had plain x-rays we have to do them in the office too.

Laboratory studies may also be needed to search for clues related to inflammation and/or infection.

Symptoms coming from shoulder problems often overlap with neck trouble so I always have to keep in mind that a shoulder condition could be causing or contributing to the neck pain. Fortunately for you it is not your responsibility to figure this all out!

I do need to have a very good history from you, which is extremely helpful in making an accurate diagnosis.

Beyond Home Care

Other means of management of neck problems could include one of the following.

- Physical therapy
- Oral prescription medication
- Neck injections
- Traction
- Gentle manipulation
- Surgery isn't a common treatment of neck pain, but may be needed if the problem is causing nerve compression in the neck

Please remember that information about all the Orthopaedic Surgery and musculoskeletal problems I treat in the office and hospital can be found by logging onto www.orthopodsurgeon.com our office teaching website. This can take you to Your Orthopaedic Connection for even more great information. Check us out.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush