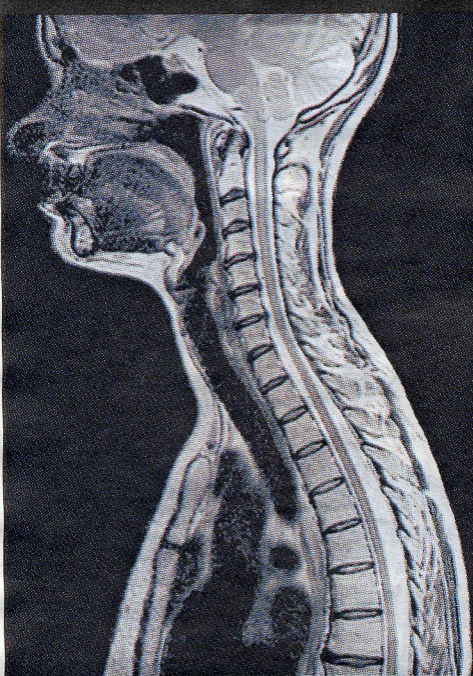


Health matters



Cheltenham Imaging Centre

The Clinical Team from Cheltenham Imaging Centre discuss the conditions affecting the Cervical Spine (Neck)

NECK pain is very common and affects a significant number of people at some point during their life. Cervical neck pain may be caused by a sprain or strain (including whiplash), wear and tear (degeneration), stenosis or a slipped or prolapsed disc.

Some of these conditions may result in nerve root compression causing brachialgia (nerve pain) – where pain radiates down either one or both arms, with the area of pain dependent on the nerve irritated. Neck pain may also be associated with tingling (paraesthesia), numbness in the arm and hand and occasionally arm weakness.

Neck pain may be investigated by X-rays, nerve conduction studies, CT scanning or MRI scans. MRI is the gold standard for imaging the nerves of the neck. It demonstrates the discs, facet joints, nerves, soft tissues (such as muscles), any spinal cord compression (prolapsed discs or tumour), infection, wear and tear, or bony abnormalities.

Treatment varies according to the diagnosis. Specialist or physiotherapist-led exercise programmes and medication for the pain may help.

If the pain is severe, referral to a spine surgeon or to a pain clinic for further assessment may be considered.

Here they can utilise a Tens machine or administer steroid and local anaesthetic injections into the spine to alleviate the symptoms. In certain conditions spinal surgery may become necessary. If there's no cord compression then a trained Osteopath, Chiropractor or Physiotherapist may use manipulation.

If you experience any ongoing neck problems, consider seeing your GP or a spinal/pain specialist.

To image the cervical spine we use X-rays, if appropriate, and High Resolution 3.0 Tesla MRI Scanning, the UK's First High Field OPEN MRI System or our advanced 1.5 Tesla MRI scanners.

Appointments can be made via referral from your GP, Physiotherapist, Chiropractor, Osteopath or other clinical practitioner.

The Cheltenham Imaging Centre offers MRI scans with no waiting time for appointments. A one-part scan, including the specialist consultant's report, costs £218 and your pictures are available to take with you on the day.

Phone 01242 535908, visit www.cheltenhamimaging.co.uk or drop into Linton House Clinic, Thirstaine Road.

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