Cervical Radiculopathy

Cervical radiculopathy is a pinched nerve in the neck. When this happens you may have pain or numbness shooting from your neck all the way down into your arm and fingers. There are many causes of this problem. Sometimes this may happen from an injury or simply from muscle tightness in the neck from overuse. It may also happen from arthritis or boney problems. If there is no improvement after treatment, further studies may be done to find the exact cause.

DIAGNOSIS

X-rays may be needed if the problems become long standing. Electromyograms may be done. This study is one in which the working of nerves and muscles is studied.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Applications of ice packs may be helpful. Ice can be used in a plastic bag with a towel around it to prevent frostbite to skin. This may be used every 2 hours for 20 to 30 minutes, or as needed, while awake or as directed by your caregiver.
- Sleep at night with a flat pillow.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- If physical therapy was prescribed, follow your caregiver's directions. If a cervical collar or cervical traction device was prescribed, use them as directed.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have pain not controlled with medications.
- You seem to be getting worse rather than better.
- You develop weakness in your hand or arm.
- You develop new numbness or loss of feeling in your arms or legs.
- You develop loss of bowel or bladder control.
- You have difficulty with walking or balance, or develop clumsiness in the use of your arms or legs.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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