Neck Pain: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

You can have neck pain anywhere from the bottom of your head to the top of your shoulders. It can spread to the upper back or arms. Injuries, painting a ceiling, sleeping with your neck twisted, staying in one position for too long, and many other activities can cause neck pain.

Most neck pain gets better with home care. Your doctor may recommend medicine to relieve pain or relax your muscles. He or she may suggest exercise and physical therapy to increase flexibility and relieve stress. You may need to wear a special (cervical) collar to support your neck for a day or two.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Try using a heating pad on a low or medium setting for 15 to 20 minutes every 2 or 3 hours. Try a warm shower in place of one session with the heating pad.
- You can also try an ice pack for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
    - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
    - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.
- If your doctor recommends a cervical collar, wear it exactly as directed.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new or worsening numbness in your arms, buttocks or legs.
- You have new or worsening weakness in your arms or legs. (This could make it hard to stand up.)
- You lose control of your bladder or bowels.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your neck pain is getting worse.
- You are not getting better after 1 week.
- You do not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to https://www.healthwise.net/patiented

Enter **V723** in the search box to learn more about **"Neck Pain: Care Instructions".**

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