

Pain in the Neck – Neck Pain

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What is inside the neck?

The neck contains the top end of the spinal column or spine, which supports the head and also protects the spinal cord. The spinal cord is the main nerve which runs from the brain, through the neck and down the back, and connects with nerves to the rest of the body.

The spine is made up of 33 bones called vertebrae stacked one on top of another to form a column. The 7 bones in the neck are known as cervical vertebrae. Between the bones are discs of gristle (cartilage) known as intervertebral discs. The sides of the bones are linked by facet joints. Many ligaments and muscles are attached to the spine and fan out from the neck to the shoulder blades and back. The muscles control movements of your head. The spine protects the spinal cord from outside damage while still allowing you to move your head in any direction.

At the level of each disc, nerve roots branch out from the spinal cord, passing through an opening in the side of the spine. The nerve roots in the neck join to form the nerve trunks that run into the arms. Impulses travel along these nerves, sending sensations such as touch and pain to the brain and messages from the brain to the muscles.

Pain in the neck can originate from many different causes which relate to the different anatomical structures in the neck. These commonly relate to degenerative disc disease or facet joints in the neck.

Further Patient Information: <http://orthopaedics.org.uk/index2.php/services/>
Recommended braces, supports & exercise equipment: <http://orthopaedics.org.uk/index2.php/shop/>
Link - <http://www.arc.org.uk/arhinfo/patpubs/6024/6024.asp>

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