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## What is Disc Herniation with Radiculopathy?

Spinal discs are composed of a soft inner core and a tough and rigid outer section. Discs protect the spine and act as shock absorbers. When they herniate, they may compress one or more of the spinal nerves. This results in the production of pain and other symptoms along the course of the nerves. This is known as radiculopathy. Radiculopathy is usually diagnosed by clinical examination, looking for changes to reflexes, muscle strength, skin sensation and the aggravation of symptoms produced by special maneuvers. CT or MRI is often performed to help confirm the diagnosis.

## What are the symptoms?

- Neck pain and stiffness often together with arm, shoulder blade or upper back pain.
- Numbness and/or pins and needles in the shoulder or arm as well as a loss in arm muscle strength.
- Symptoms may be worsened by neck movement, sitting for extended periods, coughing or straining.

## How is it treated?

Treatment may include the application of ice, rest, massage, joint manipulation and mobilization, rehabilitation exercises, stretches and the use of therapeutic modalities. Medication for pain and inflammation control may be necessary. In severe or deteriorating cases local injection or surgery may be required.

## What can I do?

- Follow the advice given to you by your practitioner.
- Perform your prescribed exercises daily within your pain tolerance.
- Stop the exercises if they worsen your symptoms and inform your practitioner so that your exercise plan can be modified.
- Avoid any aggravating activities.

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