

## c5-6 disc herniation

Posted by rpowell01 - 18 Mar 2011 12:29

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Last year I started experiencing all these weird symptoms. Numbness in my hands, pain in my hands, arms and shoulders. Keep in mind this is both extremities. At the same time I started experiencing chest pains and shortness of breath. I have had a nuclear stress test which came back normal. I was diagnoses has having anxiety. Well I decided to see a Neurologist. He ordered all kinds of test with a cervical MRI. The results of the MRI came back with C2-3 disc protrusion, C5-6 on left side, a disc herniation is present into the left foraminal area resulting in left foraminal stenosis. Keep in mind this all started in January 2009 and I am service connected with the VA for a cervical and lumbar strain from injuries that occurred 15 years ago. Also on the MRI it was noted that I do have a straightening of the lordosis with reversal cervical curvature. I have spasms for 15 years and I am afraid this has caused the reverse curvature in my neck. I have not had any injuries to cause the herniated disc since my original injuries 15 years ago in the Army. Is it possible that the reverse curvature (Cervical Kyphosis), over a long period of time, has caused the herniated disc? I now have degenerative disc disease from the injury 15 years ago. Is there anyway to correct the reverse curvature? Thanks for any information you can give me because I have live 15 years in pain and I want it to stop or at least calm down...

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## Re: c5-6 disc herniation

Posted by Dr. Corenman - 19 Mar 2011 10:57

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I assume your symptoms are bilaterally equal (left arm equals right arm). The way to understand how symptoms are generated is to look at what is present in the examination and imaging and compare to what symptoms would be expected by the imaging. Your symptoms are diffuse. A herniated disc at C5-6 left would cause left neck, posterior shoulder and arm pain radiating to the thumb side of the hand, made worse with bending the head back or to the left and improved with right bending. It would not cause right arm pain.

The C2-3 protrusion I assume is not compressing the spinal cord as that would be very unusual. This disc should cause no symptoms other than upper neck pain and occasionally headaches.

The reversal of the cervical curve is normally a result of degenerative disc disease or antalgia (pain from positioning). It is not a cause of symptoms by itself.

If your symptoms are so diffuse, you could have a condition like polymyalgia rheumatica or fibromyalgia but normally fibromyalgia has leg symptoms too. It is a possibility that you have diffuse degenerative disc disease in the neck causing significant neck pain and you are developing somatization syndrome.

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## Re: c5-6 disc herniation

Posted by rpowell01 - 16 Apr 2011 16:56

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Whenever I wrote I missed some keys points. I am 42 years of age. In January 2010 I awoke with numbness in both hands, not just one area but all over. I thought to myself, okay there is noway I was sleeping on both hands to cause them to go to sleep. I didn't have the pain in my arms just the numbness and tingling in both hands. I didn't feel any difference in my neck. In May 2010 I had a MRI on the cervical which showed bulges at C2-C3, C5-C6 and C6-C7. A month later I started having the shortness of breath and chest pains. On August 6, 2010 I ended up in the ER because I thought I was having a heart attack. After lab work and Chest Xrays and two hours of observation the Doc told me it was Anxiety. I could understand how this was Anxiety because my blood pressure went up to 197/93 and I normally have really good blood pressure. Yes I am a little overweight but I do work or did exercise by working outside of what I could do. Anyway, I dealt with all the numbness/tingling, shortness of breath and chest pains up to December 2010. That is when I said enough is enough and that is when I went to the Neurologist who ordered all those tests I wrote above.

Since I wrote my topic above I have been having numbness bilateral in my triceps. And, the pain in my hands has now went up to my forearms and elbows. I was really concerned at this point. So this past Monday I seen a Chief Orthopedic Surgeon who was baffled that the MRI report showed left foraminal stenosis, I had bilateral pain and after conducting a few tests on me said my right arm was weak. He ordered an ECI and on Tuesday I had the procedure. Wednesday I felt really great, just little pain in my right arm. I had not chest pains or shortness of breath. On Thursday I awoke with stiffness in my neck and a headache which lasted about 6 hours. Still had pain in my right forearm but no numbness btw. Friday (yesterday) wasn't a good day. Once again the chest pains and shortness of breath came back to haunt me and numbness in both triceps are back. I want to point one more thing out. A few weeks ago I had this feeling in my neck which I never had before. It felt like a knot was there. I bent my neck backwards and I kind of bent it hard. Well, I almost passed out and I caught myself. It was the next day that I started having the numbness in both triceps and more pain in both forearms. Did I possibly do some more damage?

I want to say I think I found out what is causing the chest pains and shortness of breath. The culprit is trigger points on the muscles going between my ribs because whenever I touch them they are painful. I think what is happening I am having spasms and they are causing my chest pains and pulling up on my diaphragm causing the shortness of breath. A friend of mine who lives in another state was concerned last year about the shortness of breath and chest pains. He had the same type of injury as I did but his was worse. For a long time they couldn't get the diagnoses correct. One day a Neurologist decided to try a few tests. First he had an Xray which showed an elevated diaphragm. Second, he had to do a sniff test to see if his diaphragm was working and it showed something was abnormal. The Neurologist ordered a special procedure on him to do an EMG on his diaphragm. Sure enough it came back that his Phrenic Nerve was paralyzed causing him to have shortness of breath.

Doc you have given me good information for me to research with. I will look up all the information you gave me. Also, the Orthopedic Surgeon who did the ECI showed me the disk herniation, yes he was

baffled by my right arm pain and the numbness. They told me if the ECI doesn't work they will need to go in and correct the issue. So far it hasn't worked.

I take Baclofen and Tramadol. I have realized that if I quit the Baclofen the chest pains come back. Inflammation causing the spasms in my chest?

I have one more question. After a lot of researching it is my understanding the numbness in the triceps is from the C6-C7, C7 nerve root. Is it possible that because of C5-6 damage it could have herniated the C6-C7? I have read where the lower disc would be affected if the current one above is not corrected. Thank you for your information Doc....

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**Re: c5-6 disc herniation**

Posted by Dr. Corenman - 17 Apr 2011 08:39

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Some of your assumptions are correct and some need correction. The diaphragm is supplied by the Phrenic nerve which itself originates from C 3-5. The lowest nerve origin of C5 corresponds to the C4-5 foramen level- so a C5-6 level problem will not cause any problem to the Phrenic nerve.

Anxiety will cause all sorts of problems. This includes muscle spasm and magnification of pain. Anxiety by itself will not cause numbness. Bilateral symmetric ascending numbness normally is not from a compressed nerve or nerves in the neck. Trigger points in the shoulder and neck region are typically caused by neck problems and not the reverse but treating them with chiropractic, acupuncture, massage and injection can help to manage and eliminate them.

A compressed C7 nerve root normally will cause "numbness" in the hand and not in the triceps area but rarely, I have seen that complaint. However, if you have bilateral numbness and only a unilateral compressed nerve, it is highly unlikely that the bilateral numbness is generated from a one sided compression.

Dr. Corenman

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**Re: c5-6 disc herniation**

Posted by rpowell01 - 17 Apr 2011 10:16

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I guess I need an updated MRI because of the new symptoms and need one on my whole back this

time. I do have spondylosis in my Thoracic Spine and DDD in my lumbar along with Lumbosacral Joint Disc Disease. I know I am in bad shape but that injury that happened 15 years ago did this to me and back then being 29 and on top of the world you don't see ahead.

I know the Neurologist originally ordered the MRI with and without contrast. I also know the Surgeons do not like the contrast for some reason. They were questioning me why he ordered them with contrast. I didn't know why.

I also understand what you said about the DDD could cause a lot of issues also. I just don't understand that in one night all the symptoms appeared.

Do you think a CT would help detect something an MRI might miss?

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### Re: c5-6 disc herniation

Posted by rpowell01 - 21 Apr 2011 17:14

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Dr. Corenman I have one more question on something that is bothering me. On Tuesday evening I didn't take my Baclofen. On Wednesday I awoke with the chest pains, shortness of breath and a spasm at my upper left inner shoulder blade area. Last night I took my baclofen and I feel really good today. A lot of my radiculopathy I had has disappeared and I hope they stay gone. What is causing the radiculopathy in my chest and upper left muscle like that? I go see my Orthopedic Spine Surgeon on Tuesday, is there anything I can recommend to him to check for this.

If everything else holds up I am going ask him to check out the Type II endplate disease at T9 and early spondylosis throughout my mid thoracic spine. This is the spot where the original injury occurred 15 years ago. I jumped out of a black hawk helicopter but my foot got caught on a seat. As I fell to the ground my face hit first then the person behind me hit my legs as he jumped out. My neck bent backwards, I heard a huge crack in my neck then I seen my feet in front of my face. I guess you can say I hyperextended my neck all the way down to my lumbar. I felt fine whenever I got up. I was more worried about my lip than anything. Well two weeks later is when everything started showing up. My thoracic at T9-10 was hurting bad. The PT stated I had a couple of facet dysfunctions. I didn't know that they were but the PT pushed on my back. She stated she couldn't get a couple of them back in. Well she finally found someone who stated he could do the job. Keep in mind I was in the Army who didn't and probably still doesn't us chiropractors. Well, after he pushed on my back I awoke 3 days later and couldn't get out of bed. From there I had all kinds of issues with my Thoracic Spine and muscle spasms to the right of T9-10 next to my shoulder blade. Then in February about 2 months later it was then I started having problems with my cervical and lumbar. I has spams all over my back. I seen a Internal Medicine Doctor for a year or so before he determined that what was going on with me was degenerative and would get worse.

What can I ask the Orthopedic Surgeon to give me relief in my thoracic spine and lower back because these two issues are my next problematic issues. See my neck has given me problems all this time, it

just got worse but now I feel they have somewhat relieved the symptoms of the cervical radiculopathy  
my thoracic spine has more pain than anything else now.

I guess I am just bad off with my spine at 42 years of age.

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