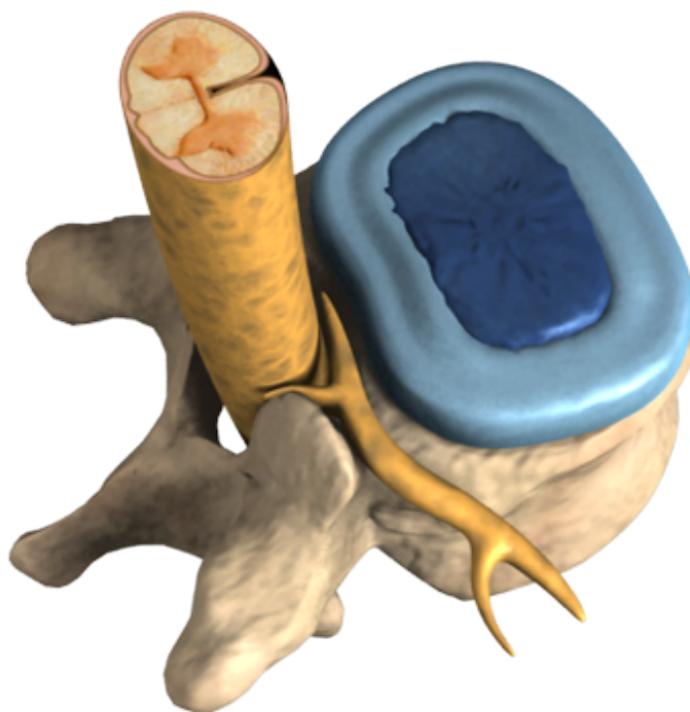
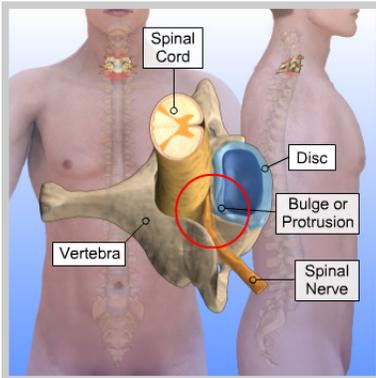


Herniated Disc - Cervical

A cervical disc herniation, or cervical radiculopathy, occurs when a small portion of a disc ruptures and causes pressure on spinal nerves in the neck. Small herniations are sometimes called bulges or protrusions, and people experiencing pain from the herniation often describe it as a pinched nerve.





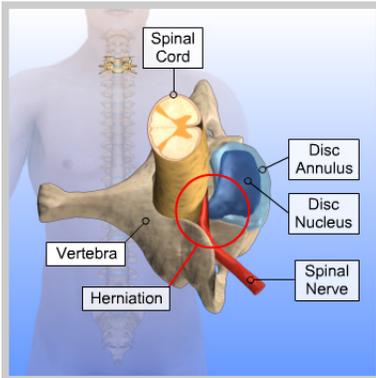
Introduction

A cervical disc herniation, or cervical radiculopathy, occurs when a small portion of a disc ruptures and causes pressure on spinal nerves in the neck. Small herniations are sometimes called bulges or protrusions, and people experiencing pain from the herniation often describe it as a pinched nerve.



Symptoms

Depending on which cervical disc has herniated, the specific pain symptoms may vary. In general, pressure on a spinal nerve causes discomfort in various sites along one or both arms, frequently down to the hand. There can be shooting, burning pains, weakness, and/or numbness. In some instances, a cervical herniation can cause pressure on the spinal cord, a condition called cervical stenosis. Stenosis can lead to a medical condition called myelopathy. Myelopathy symptoms can include neck stiffness, numbness or heaviness in the arms and hands, or a shock-like feeling down the arms or legs. In severe cases, there can be difficulty using the arms and hands or difficulty walking.



Causes

Cervical disc herniations are most frequently caused by degeneration due to the normal aging process. As small tears in the disc's outer layer (annulus) develop and enlarge over time, the jellylike inner layer (nucleus) may bulge outward, causing pressure on the spinal cord and nerves. Occasionally, trauma or an episode of heavy lifting causes sudden rupture of the disc resulting in symptoms.



Summary

Arm pain and discomfort from a disc herniation can often be resolved with medication and non-operative treatments (physical therapy). When these treatments are successful, arm pain tends to disappear first and it may take longer for weakness or numbness to improve. Surgery is performed for those whose symptoms do not improve.