

This leaflet explains what **neck pain** is and gives advice on what to do about it.

'Simple', 'muscular' or 'non-specific neck pain' are terms used to describe the common neck pain that most of us experience at some point in our lives.

Where is it felt?

You may feel **pain and stiffness in the neck**, head, shoulders and upper back.

How could it affect me?

The symptoms can be felt more by:

- Neck Movements
- Sitting or prolonged awkward positions

Neck pain can affect our ability to carry out daily activities, including work and hobbies.

At times the pain can feel severe and for some be ongoing. This can affect our general well-being and mental health.

Why does it happen?

Neck pain problems can start because of an incident or increased physical demand (for example lifting). It can also start for no obvious reason.

It can affect any of us at any age, but tends to be more common from our 30's to our 60's. Those who have had neck pain before are more likely to have it again.

The severity and impact of symptoms are often due to a combination of:

- How we are made (muscles, joints and nerves)
- What we think (thoughts and feelings)
- How fit and healthy we are
- How we move
- What activities we do
- How we do our activities



Is it serious?

Based on the information you have provided, your physiotherapist believes you have non-specific neck pain that is **not** a medical concern.

Neck pain can sometimes be a sign of other medical conditions. Investigations are sometimes needed to rule out other problems but are not needed to confirm non-specific neck pain. In most cases x-rays are not advised and scans are only useful in a small number of people with neck pain with other signs and symptoms.

If you are not improving or getting worse despite following the advice given, please contact us again.

Will it get better?

Most people will see an improvement in the first 2 to 6 weeks for a new onset of neck pain or a flare-up of longstanding neck pain. It can take 6 to 12 weeks to get back to normal. It can take some people longer and some describe ongoing problems. It is important to understand that to recover you should improve your physical and mental health as best as you can. This reduces the chance of having long-standing neck pain.

What can I do to help myself?

Continue to carry out the self-help advice on **managing your pain, modifying your activities** and gradually **building up your physical and mental health**. Introduce the further advice and exercises you receive from your physiotherapist. Exercises cause your body to adapt to activity. It's a gradual process. For them to work you will need to stick with them.

Consider the main factors affecting your situation and work towards improving them.

- Consider other pain medication options with a Pharmacist or GP
- Improve physical fitness through activity and exercise (see your exercise sheet)
- Improve your lifestyle (weight, smoking, alcohol, activity, stress)
- Improve your mental health and well-being

What can be done to help me?

Further physiotherapy assessment and treatment may be necessary if you have followed the advice given and it has not helped. Being actively involved in your health and well-being is still the most important part of your recovery.

There is a good chance that you will improve if you follow the advice you have been given. If you feel you have not despite following the advice, please contact us again for further support.

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg