

Pain Management: Neck and Shoulder Pain

Neck and shoulder pain can be classified in many different ways. Some people experience only neck pain or only shoulder pain, while others experience pain in both areas.

What Causes Neck Pain?

Causes of neck pain include:

- Abnormalities in the bone or joints
- Trauma
- Poor posture
- Degenerative diseases
- Tumors
- Muscle strain

What Causes Shoulder Pain?

The shoulder is a ball and socket joint with a large range of movement. Such a mobile joint tends to be more susceptible to injury. Shoulder pain can stem from one or more of the following causes:

- Strains from overexertion
- Tendonitis from overuse
- Shoulder joint instability
- Dislocation
- Collar or upper arm bone fractures
- Frozen shoulder
- Pinched nerves (also called radiculopathy)

How Are Neck and Shoulder Pain Diagnosed?

- X-rays: Plain X-rays can reveal narrowing of the space between two spinal bones, arthritis-like diseases, tumors, slipped discs, narrowing of the spinal canal, fractures and instability of the spinal column.
- MRI: Magnetic resonance imaging is a noninvasive procedure that can reveal the detail of neural (nerve-related) elements, as well as problems with the tendons and ligaments.



Neck Pai...

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How Are Neck and Shoulder Pain Treated?

The treatment of soft tissue neck and shoulder pain often includes the use of anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve or Naprosyn). Pain relievers such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) may also be recommended. Depending on the source of pain, drugs like muscle relaxers and even antidepressants might be helpful. Pain also may be treated with a local application of moist heat or ice. Local corticosteroid injections are often helpful for arthritis of the shoulder. For both neck and shoulder pain movement, exercises may help. For cases in which nerve roots or the spinal cord are involved, surgical procedures may be necessary. Your doctor can tell you which is the best course of treatment for you.

WebMD Medical Reference | Reviewed by Melinda Ratini, DO, MS on April 08, 2015

Sources [^](#)

SOURCES:

WebMD Health News: "FDA Approves Cymbalta for Chronic Musculoskeletal Pain."
American Chronic Pain Association.

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NEXT ARTICLE

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Pain Management Guide >

1 **Overview & Facts**

4 **Treatment & Care**

2 **Symptoms & Types**

5 **Living & Managing**

3 **Diagnosis & Tests**

6 **Support & Resources**