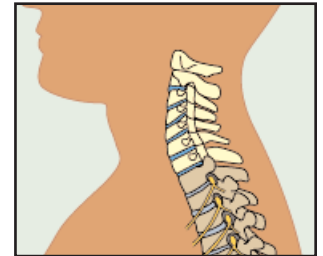




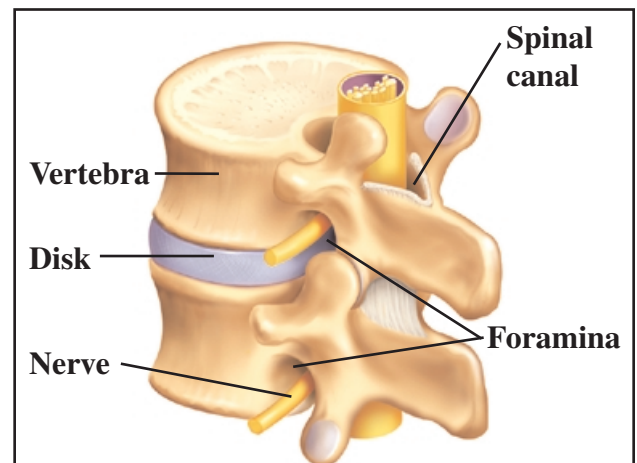
## Cervical Spine Problems

Your neck needs to be strong to hold up your head, which may weigh 10 pounds or more. But injury, poor posture, wear and tear, and diseases such as arthritis can damage the structures of your cervical spine. Pain and weakness in your neck and arms may be the end result.

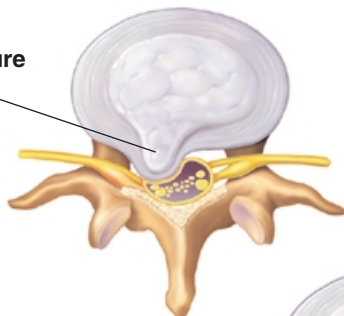


### A Healthy Cervical Spine

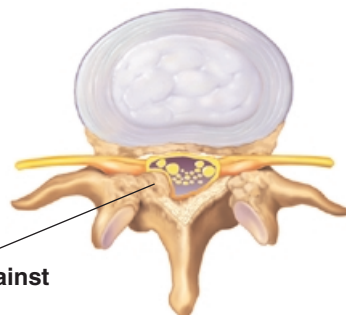
The upper spine is a flexible column made up of the **cervical vertebrae**, seven bones separated by elastic, shock-absorbing **disks**. The spinal cord runs through a large central opening (**spinal canal**) formed by the vertebrae. Nerves branching from the spinal cord travel to your arms and other parts of your body through smaller openings (**foramina**) in the vertebrae.



Damaged disk putting pressure on nerves



Bone spurs pressing against nerves



### Your Problem Spine

One of the most common cervical spine problems is a damaged disk. A disk may be injured by a sudden movement (**herniate**), or it may wear out gradually (**degenerate**). A worn-out disk may become so flat that the vertebrae above and below it touch or slip back and forth. As disks wear out, abnormal bone growths (**bone spurs**) can form on the vertebrae and in the foramina, causing narrowing (**stenosis**).

### Notes