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Cervical Spine Surgery – Posterior Cervical Decompression

By Dr. Shankar Acharya, Senior Consultant Spine Surgeon at Sir Gangaram Hospital, New Delhi

Overview

Cervical spine surgery is performed to treat conditions affecting the neck, which can cause pain, numbness, weakness, and limited movement. One of the most common procedures is *Posterior Cervical Decompression*, a surgery designed to relieve pressure on the nerves in the neck area.

The cervical spine consists of the first seven vertebrae of your spine, located in the neck. When these vertebrae press on the spinal cord or nerves due to injury, herniated discs, bone spurs, or other conditions, it can lead to serious problems, including pain that radiates down the arms, muscle weakness, and loss of coordination. Posterior cervical decompression surgery is used to remove the sources of pressure on the nerves, helping to restore function and relieve symptoms.

Who Needs Posterior Cervical Decompression Surgery?

This surgery is usually recommended for people suffering from:

- **Cervical Radiculopathy:** Pain, numbness, or weakness radiating down the arm due to pinched nerves in the neck.
- **Cervical Myelopathy:** Spinal cord compression causing symptoms like weakness in the arms and legs, difficulty walking, or coordination problems.
- **Herniated Discs or Bone Spurs:** Abnormal growths or disc material pressing on spinal nerves.
- **Spinal Stenosis:** Narrowing of the spinal canal that puts pressure on the spinal cord and nerves.



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What Happens During Posterior Cervical Decompression?

In a posterior cervical decompression, the surgeon makes an incision at the back of the neck to access the cervical spine. The procedure involves removing parts of bone or disc material that are pressing on the spinal cord or nerves. This could include:

- Removing bone spurs
- Removing part of a disc (if it's bulging or herniated)
- Removing the lamina (the back portion of the vertebrae)

In some cases, the surgeon may also use *spinal fusion* to stabilize the spine, especially if multiple vertebrae are involved.

Benefits of Posterior Cervical Decompression

- **Pain Relief:** By relieving pressure on the nerves, this surgery can significantly reduce neck pain, arm pain, numbness, and weakness.
- **Improved Mobility:** Many patients experience better neck mobility after surgery.
- **Prevents Further Damage:** By addressing the compression on the nerves or spinal cord, it can prevent further damage and complications.

Recovery and Post-Operative Care

- **Hospital Stay:** Most patients will spend 1-2 days in the hospital after surgery for observation and recovery.
- **Pain Management:** Post-surgery pain is usually manageable with medications, and your doctor will guide you through this.
- **Physical Therapy:** Physical therapy may be recommended to help strengthen the neck and improve movement.
- **Follow-up Appointments:** Regular follow-ups with Dr. Shankar Acharya will ensure your healing progress and address any concerns.



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Risks and Considerations

As with any surgery, there are some risks involved, although they are rare. These can include:

- Infection
- Nerve damage (though very rare)
- Blood loss
- Difficulty swallowing or hoarseness
- Spinal instability (requiring further surgery)

Dr. Shankar Acharya's expertise ensures that these risks are minimized and that you receive the best possible care.

Why Choose Dr. Shankar Acharya?

Dr. Shankar Acharya is a highly experienced spine surgeon with over 30 years of expertise in treating complex spine conditions. He has helped countless patients recover from neck and back pain, and his advanced techniques ensure the best outcomes. As the Chairman of the Department of Spine Surgery at Sir Gangaram Hospital, New Delhi, he is renowned for his successful surgeries and compassionate care.

If you're experiencing neck pain, weakness, or any of the symptoms related to nerve compression in the cervical spine, Dr. Shankar Acharya can provide a tailored treatment plan to help you regain your quality of life.



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Conclusion

Posterior Cervical Decompression is an effective surgical option for relieving pressure on the nerves in the neck. Whether you're dealing with cervical radiculopathy, myelopathy, or spinal stenosis, this procedure can provide relief and improve your overall quality of life. If you or a loved one are struggling with these issues, don't hesitate to consult with Dr. Shankar Acharya to discuss the most appropriate treatment options for you.

For more information or to schedule a consultation, please contact Dr. Shankar Acharya's office at Sir Gangaram Hospital, New Delhi.



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