

## Medications For Non-Surgical Treatment Of The Cervical Herniated Disc

So, if you have a herniated disc of the cervical spine, most likely you are experiencing pain, pain in the neck with radiation down one or the other arm. You may have some numbness and tingling, but it is probably the pain that is driving you crazy. So the first line of defense, the first thing to do is to get yourself somewhat comfortable and you are going to need some medications for that. Even if you are the type of person who does not like to take medicine, if you are having symptoms of a herniated disc, most likely, you are going to have to think about taking medication. Most of these are prescription and will require you to see your primary care physician or to see a spine specialist to get the prescriptions. So let us talk about the medications. There are three types of medications. One are the anti-inflammatories, two are the narcotics, and the third type is the prednisone based or the steroid-type medications. The first line of defense, the first type of treatment usually people try are the anti-inflammatories and usually over-the-counter things like Advil, Aleve, Motrin. If you need to go to something stronger, you have to get a prescription and those drugs are like Celebrex, \_\_\_\_\_, Relafen things like that that come in a higher dose. Now there are risks with taking those types of medications, usually things like ulcers, bleeding in the stomach and you have to speak to your doctor about that. But it is no problem usually just to start initially with things over the counter like Advil, Aleve, and Motrin and maybe even Tylenol. So, the first type of drugs is the anti-inflammatories, certainly try those, if the pain is unremitting and not controlled by those, you are going to have to move right away into the second category and those are the narcotics. Those are things with codeine, morphine, drugs such as Tylenol No. 3, Tylenol No. 4, Vicodin, Lortab, hydrocodone, Percocet, those types of drugs and they absolutely need a prescription from your physician. But those will help you and help you reduce the pain, so maybe you can relax a little bit, get some sleep. The third type of medication is the steroid. These are prednisone like drugs and usually the prescription will come for something called a Medrol Dosepak. It is a box, you open it up, there is a blister pack inside with the pills, usually the first day it is six pills, then five, then four, then three, and two, and one. It is over a period of six days, you take this prednisone and that will reduce the inflammation. That really does work in many cases and help. So, with these medications, what we are trying to do is get you comfortable, why, so we can buy time. We need time for you to heal. Remember, your body wants to heal and also remember your body can heal. Most of the time, in the vast majority of cases if you have a herniated disc of the cervical spine, you can get better on your own and avoid surgery, but you need time. So, for these few weeks while you are getting better, why not make yourself as comfortable as you can and use some of these medications? All the medicines have side effects. So, speak to your doctor about that and you have to weigh the risk versus the benefit, but use a combination of the medications to try to get

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yourself comfortable, and most importantly, remember you have got to sleep. If you are up all night with pain, you are going to be useless the next day. You are going to be more sensitive to the pain, you are going to be crabby, you are going to be stabbing at people, you are going to be miserable and miserable to be around. So use the medications especially at night to sleep and try different positions. You may have to sleep in a recliner chair, but you have got to get some sleep.

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