

3 Bits of Good News... and One Not So Good

So you have a cervical herniated disc? I have got three bits of good news and one bit of news which may not be so great. The first bit of good news is that you have a diagnosis. Because you had an MRI scan and we have confirmed that you have a herniated disc, we know what is going on. We know why you have the pain, numbness, tingling and weakness in the arm. That is really good news. We have lots of patients who come to see me with neck pain, arm pains, and they do not have a herniated disc, and we have no idea what is going on with them, and it is very frustrating for those patients. So, be happy that you have a definite diagnosis, and from this point on, we can make clear decisions about how to treat you. The second bit of good news is that what you have is not dangerous. You do not have a tumor. You do not have cancer. You do not have a massive infection. You are going to be okay. What you have is a benign condition. We know a lot about it. It is nothing new. It is nothing unusual. You have really good ways of treating it, and it is benign. The third bit of good news is what you have is treatable. Either you are going to get better on your own or we have ways to get you better, but you are not going to have to live like this forever. So, three bits of good news, be happy. What is the fourth bit? The fourth bit of news is if you are watching this video and you have had pain for several weeks, chances are you may be needing surgery, and for me to say that, that is not bad news. That is actually good news, but I know for you hearing that, it may be upsetting. It is the more you learn about this, the more you realize that this is actually a potentially very good option for you, and in a way, it may give you comfort knowing that you do not have to live like this forever. So, the fourth bit of good news is if you are not getting better between 6 or 8 or 12 weeks, you may need to have surgery, and by that, I am talking about a microscopic procedure almost everyone of our patients goes home the same day. So, learn about that part if that makes you anxious, but overall, having herniated disc of the cervical spine is not a bad thing to have in medicine. There are a lot of worse things you could have, and hopefully this is something you will get over within a few weeks, and if not, we are here to treat you and get you better.

Seth L. Neubardt, M.D.

SLN/gisl/law/chi/011714/SLN10001-1