

# Cervical Foraminal Stenosis - What You Need to Know About



The condition where the openings between the bones become tight or narrow in the spine is known as cervical foraminal stenosis. The reason why this situation is known as foraminal stenosis is that the openings between the bones are called foramen. It is a specific form of spinal stenosis.

People suffering from this condition experience pressing of the nerves in the spinal cord as they pass through the foramen. As openings become narrow in the case of foraminal stenosis, the chances of pinching of nerves become high. Now, a pinched nerve can cause radiculopathy. In severe cases, decompression surgery may be required and that may involve the use of [Orthopaedic Trauma Implants](#).

In this post, we will discuss cervical foraminal stenosis in detail along with its diagnosis and treatment.

## **What Are the Causes of Cervical Foraminal Stenosis?**

Some of the most common causes of the condition include:

### **Bone Spurs**

Bone spurs can develop on uncovertebral joints and can affect the intervertebral foramen. This is one of the most common conditions that could lead to cervical foraminal stenosis.

### **Degenerative Disc Disease**

Another common cause of foraminal stenosis is degenerative disc disease where intervertebral discs slowly lose hydration and become flat. This condition is common in people as they grow old, and when this occurs, the foraminal space gets reduced while causing foraminal stenosis.

### **Disc Herniation**

A herniated disc is a condition where the outer layer of the intervertebral disc becomes damaged, and the inner material protrudes out. This also results in narrowing of foraminal space while compressing the nerve. This condition may also result in inflammation of the nerve because of the secretion of inflammatory chemicals present in the material that protrudes out.

### **How is Foraminal Stenosis diagnosed?**

A correct diagnosis is important to identify the best and most feasible treatment. During the diagnosis, the patient's medical history plays an important role, and the doctor always examines that to rule out the possibilities of other conditions. This also helps know underlying conditions that the patient is suffering from.

Besides this, a physical examination is necessary to check instability, tenderness, and lesions around the affected site. To examine the range of motion, strength, and flexibility of the neck, several clinical tests may also be performed. Above all,

imaging tests like MRI, CT scan, and/or myelography will be ordered for the confirmation of the condition.

### **How is Foraminal Stenosis Treated?**

The treatment will be done based on the diagnosis. In most cases, the healthcare service provider always tries to fix the condition using non-surgical treatment. Physical therapy is a reliable treatment method, especially in mild to moderate cases. This is a long-term treatment way where targeted exercises and other physical activities are suggested by the physiotherapist. Stretching and strengthening programs are suggested to meet specific client needs.

During the treatment, the patient is advised to avoid heavy lifting, sports activities, and twisting/bending the neck. Medicines like acetaminophen and NSAIDs are also prescribed to curb pain and inflammation. Sometimes, cervical epidural steroid injections may also be applied.

Now, severe cases of the condition demand surgery, and based on the diagnosis, anterior cervical discectomy and fusion or cervical artificial disc replacement may be done. Another surgery cervical foraminotomy may be suggested.

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