

Take care of your posture to stay away from spine problems

With the lifestyle that we have, the urban population and to some extent the suburban population as well, has been suffering from a variety of posture related problems – more specifically neck pain and back pain.

Neck pain persists not only because of poor posture but also because of heavy shoulder bags, long hours spent at the computer and use of other personal electronic devices. All of these cause changes in the disc, which is the soft jelly-like structure in our spine that separates the bones of the vertebral column. The disc being soft and pliable is responsible for movements of our spine. However, due to any of the factors as mentioned above, this disc starts to dry up sooner than it usually does with advancing age.

A dried up or desiccated disc causes abnormal movements



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between the bones (vertebrae) which results in strain on the ligaments binding these bones together and muscle spasm which ends up causing neck



pain. These abnormal movements are also responsible for extra bone formation called osteophytes which can sometimes be seen on plain X-ray also.

If these factors are allowed to persist then the next step is disc herniation which causes compression of the nerve roots exiting from the spine resulting in excruciating pain going down the arm(s), or may cause compression of the spinal cord which results in unsteadiness in walking, tendency to fall and later weakness in both lower limbs with or without loss of bladder and bowel control. The cause of this trouble is ascertained by an MRI of the cervical spine and which

clearly shows the offending discs or osteophytes or both.

If such is the case, then a small surgery to relieve compression on the nerve root or the spinal cord or both is required. This is usually done from the front of the neck and a soft collar is prescribed for a few days. The person can join work in a couple of weeks. Results of the surgery are usually excellent and the return of function is also good.

However, if we are able to use our spine properly by maintaining correct posture and doing regular exercises then we can stay away from these issues which otherwise in most instances end up with debilitating, dependency or surgery.

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