

Cardiff Spinal Clinic

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Posterior Cervical Fusion

Posterior fusion of the cervical spine involves an incision in the back of the neck and the muscles at the back of the neck are then retracted. Quite often cervical fusion also is associated with decompression of the spinal cord and/or nerve roots.

Either screws and/or rods or an implant called DTRAX will be used. Posterior cervical fusion is less common than anterior fusion.

Conditions treated with posterior fusion: cervical myelopathy (spinal cord compression), cervical kyphosis, failed anterior surgery and/or pseudarthrosis (non-fusion) of the anterior fusion.

Before posterior cervical fusion: after the decision to proceed with posterior cervical fusion has been made then you will be seen at the pre-assessment clinic where further assessment will be performed as well as the consent form will be signed. You will be given information to take home with you in respect of the consent with regards to risks and benefits and British Spine Registry information.

If you are taking any anti-inflammatory medication or blood thinning medication, then this needs to be highlighted and some medications need to be stopped at varying times before the surgery.

During the procedure: a posterior longitudinal cut is made in the back of the neck. X-rays are used to determine the correct levels. The muscles are then dissected and retracted to give access to the back of the spine. Implants are inserted with bone graft to help fuse the area of concern. The surgery takes approximately two to three hours.

After posterior cervical fusion: you will be transferred from theatre to the recovery room before being taken back to your room. You would be in hospital for between two to three days. A brace or collar may be used but this is individualised to each patient. You will be given exercises to do by the physiotherapist and will be sent home on medication.

Physiotherapy will be prescribed during your hospital stay and will be required after.

You will then come back to clinic appointments where the outcome from surgery will be reviewed and x-rays performed.