

Cardiff Spinal Clinic

Mr. Alwyn Jones. MB BCH, Bsc, FRCS, Msc, FRCS (Orth)

Posterior cervical foraminotomy

Posterior cervical foraminotomy is a procedure where an incision is made in the back of the neck and bony decompression is performed to give individual nerves or a combination of nerves more room, to relieve nerve compression. A foraminotomy is performed for radicular pain, ie nerve root pain.

Before posterior cervical foraminotomy: after the decision to proceed with posterior cervical foraminotomy has been made then you will be seen at the pre-assessment clinic where further assessment will be performed as well as the consent 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 posterior cervical foraminotomy: an incision is made in the back of the neck and muscles dissected on the side of the symptoms. After x-rays are used to identify the appropriate levels and bone is then removed to give the nerve more space. The wound is then closed over a drain.

After posterior cervical foraminotomy: you will be transferred from theatre to the recovery room before being taken back to your room. You would be in hospital for between one to two 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.