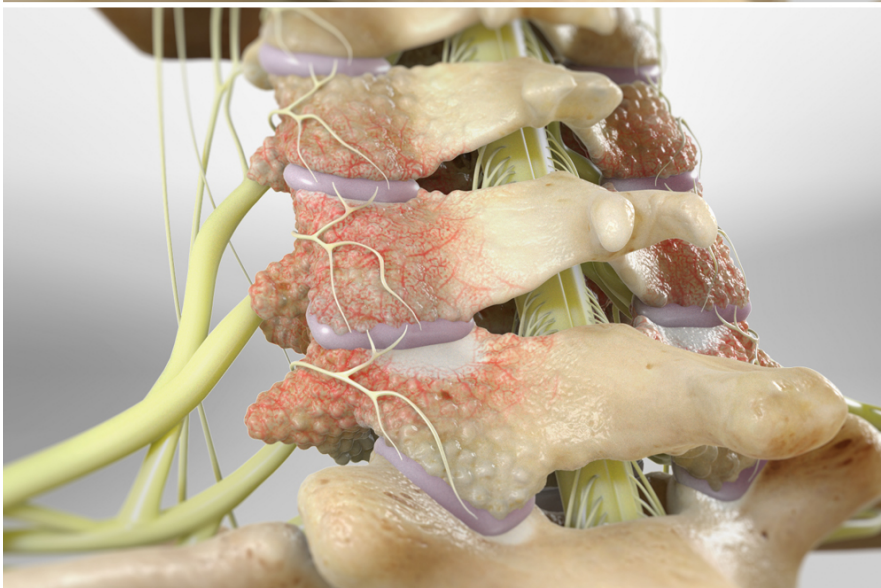
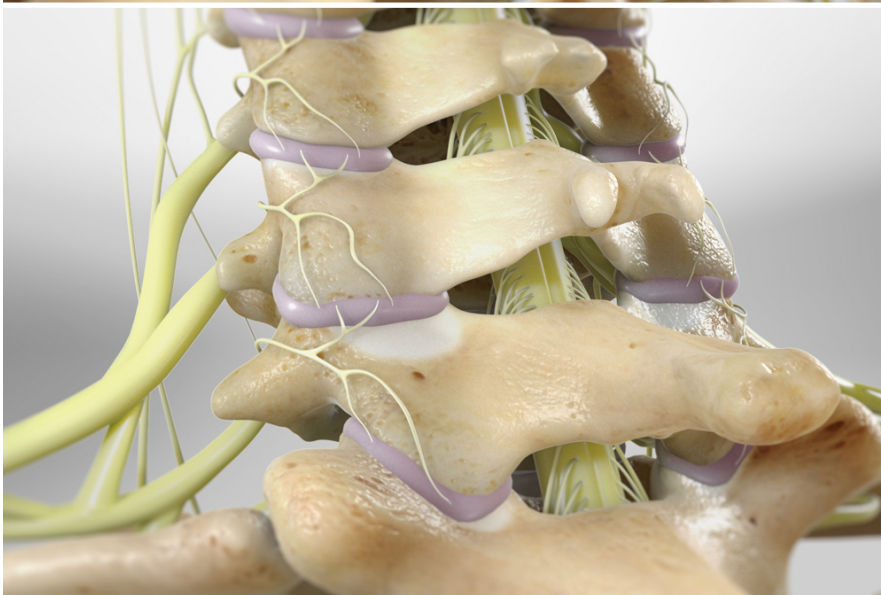
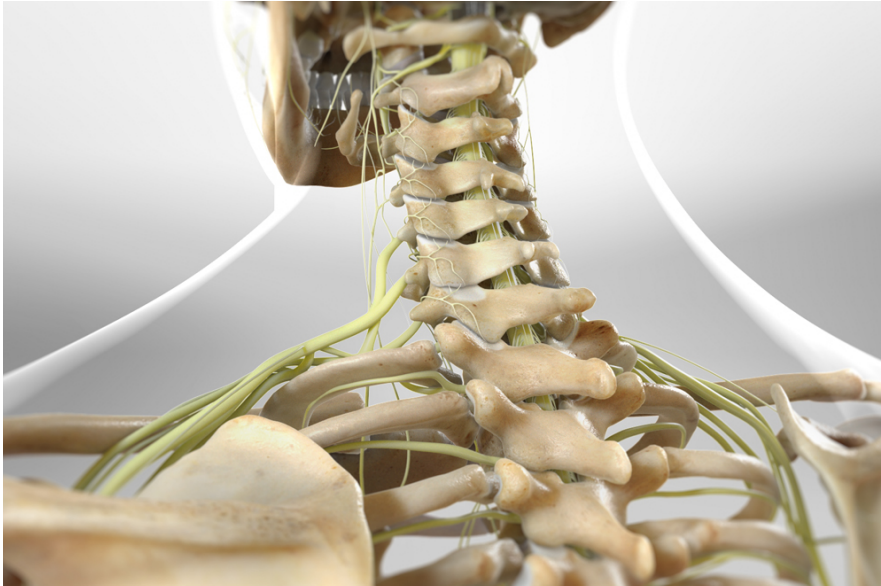




Cervical Facet Joint Syndrome



Overview

This is a problem with the facet joints of the cervical spine. They are the joints found where one vertebra connects to another. Facet joints support your spine, while allowing it to bend and twist. With this syndrome, these joints become stiff and painful in the upper part of your spine.

Anatomy

Let's take a closer look at a healthy facet joint. Cartilage lines the surfaces of the bones. This helps them glide against each other smoothly. The joint is covered with a capsule of connective tissue. It contains lubricating fluid.

Damaged joints

When you have cervical facet joint syndrome, these joints of the cervical spine are damaged and swollen. It can happen because of injury or overuse. The cartilage may wear away, so the bones don't glide smoothly. This makes it hard for your spine to bend and twist properly.

Symptoms

What are the symptoms? You may have trouble turning your head. You may find that you are turning your entire body when you want to look to the side. You can have pain in your neck and shoulders. And you may feel pain in the back of your head.

Treatment

How do we treat it? We start with things like joint injections, medications and physical therapy. If those don't help, we can treat the nerve roots to block pain. We may recommend surgery. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you.