

## Early warning signs of spinal cord compression (myelopathy)

- Clumsiness in arms or legs
- Heaviness or weakness of arms or legs - you may have trouble grasping and holding on to items
- Pins and needles in arms and or legs
- Patches of numbness in arms, legs or trunk
- Loss of fine motor skills – you may have difficulty with handwriting, buttoning your clothes, picking up coins or feeding yourself
- Changes in your bowel or bladder control
- Feeling more unsteady with walking

If you experience any combination of these symptoms, please attend your local A&E service immediately.

**Myelopathy** is the medical term for spinal cord compression in the neck (cervical) or chest region (thoracic) of the spine.

Symptoms typically develop slowly over time, but rarely symptoms can progress suddenly.

There are two main causes of myelopathy:

1. Age related changes, such as formation of bony spurs that compress the spinal cord.
2. A disc prolapse that compresses the spinal cord, this often results in symptoms that start quickly.