

ASK YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPIST

Why Does My Entire Arm Ache Especially When I Am Sitting, Coughing or Sneezing ?

There are a number of reasons why your arm would ache, however there are several clues in this instance that tell me what the cause of the symptoms are most likely to be. If the pain were coming from the shoulder you would likely have pain and or achiness around the shoulder joint and to the middle of the upper arm, but not usually past that point.

Normally, when the achiness is in the entire arm, this is due to the fact that the nerve that is irritated is causing the pain to travel down the arm along the nerve in question to the muscles that that nerve controls. Between the spinal bones that make up your neck are fluid filled discs (like a ketchup packet) that provide cushioning and shock absorption. The discs also help to maintain adequate space for the nerves that come off the spinal cord to pass between the spinal segments without being compressed. If these nerves that come off the spinal cord are compressed by a disc irritation, injury or loss of disc height space, then the nerve becomes irritated. Since nerves attach to and control muscles, if a nerve is compressed, then the nerve carries the irritation to the muscle it controls. That muscle then becomes irritated, sore and goes into spasm. This makes the entire arm ache since the nerves in the neck and arm start at the neck portion of the spinal cord and run the entire way down the arm.

In addition, if coughing and sneezing cause pain in the neck and or arm, this is another sign that the cause of the pain is the neck. By nature, coughing, sneezing and laughing increase pressure on the discs and nerve roots internally. So.... if the nerve and or disc are irritated, and then you cough, sneeze or laugh increasing internal pressure on an already irritated area, then this makes sense as to why the pain in the arm is occurring. Just for reference, the more pressure there is at a nerve near the spine where it comes off the spinal cord, the more pain

there will be down the entire arm. Likewise, the less pressure there is at the neck portion of the disc/nerve root the more you will feel central neck pain and less arm pain.

So.... How do I get rid of this arm achiness and pain?

In order to get the arm achiness and pain to go away as well as return to sitting, coughing and sneezing without pain, the pressure must be removed from the disc and nerve root. This can be done by the highly trained expert Physical Therapists at Cardin and Miller Physical Therapy who will perform a thorough evaluation on you to determine the root cause of why your arm is achy and painful. Cardin and Miller Therapists will work to remove the pressure from your nerve and or disc, which will take away your arm pain and get you back to a pain free life.

CALL Cardin and Miller **TODAY** at 717-245-0400 to schedule your **FREE SCREEN** to discuss YOUR issues one on one with a physical therapist to see if Physical Therapy is right for you.

Please email me if you have any questions regarding neck or arm pain or any other orthopedic ailment and I would be happy to answer your questions: smiller@cardinmillerpt.com.

Steve Miller PT, C.Ped is the co-owner of Cardin and Miller Physical Therapy in Carlisle. His column will appear twice monthly in the Sentinel Thrive Section.