

NECK AND SPINAL MOBILISATION

THE FACTS EXPLAINED

Mobilisations and manipulations are treatments offered by physiotherapists to aim to improve mobility and reduce pain.

SSAFA physiotherapists are highly skilled at knowing when the use of manipulation is appropriate and can be performed both safely and effectively. If there is any indication you are at risk your physiotherapist will advise you and use alternative techniques.

Your safety and comfort are paramount at all times.

WHAT IS MANIPULATION AND WHY USE IT?

Mobilisations and manipulation are two highly effective treatment techniques in the relief and prevention of low back and neck pain.

- Mobilisations are passive movements of joints by hand to encourage movement
- Manipulation is applying a controlled force to a joint of the spine which can result in a clicking or popping sound.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER TREATMENT?

- After treatment you should feel less pain, be more flexible or comfortable in your movements.
- Some patients may feel mild post treatment soreness or feel tired in the first 24 hours after treatment.
- Relief should be significant either after the first visit, but it may take several visits.

EXAMINATION PRIOR TO MANIPULATION

- Your Physiotherapist will carry out an assessment prior to performing manipulation, to check for potential disturbance to the function of the spinal cord, nerves and vertebral arteries.
- The assessment will include a physical examination of your neck, questioning, and may include tests to discount any underlying problem with the blood flow to your vertebral arteries, before treatment is undertaken.
- These tests do not give an absolute indication of risk, but they do provide the best available assurance that it is safe for your Physiotherapist to proceed with manipulation.
- At any time you have the right to decline a proposed treatment

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

- Spinal manipulation is a safe treatment performed by trained practitioners.
- In rare circumstances complications from neck manipulation can occur. These may involve injury to, or blockage of the vertebral arteries with the potential to cause stroke even death.
- There is also a small risk to of damage to nerves, bones, muscles ligaments of arteries or that manipulation may cause pressure on nerves going down the arm.
- Cauda Equina syndrome (CES), a significant narrowing of the lower part of the spinal canal in which nerves become pinched and may cause pain, weakness, loss of feeling in one or both legs, and bowel or bladder problems, may be an extremely rare complication of spinal manipulation. However, it is unclear if there is an association between spinal manipulation and CES.

If you have any further questions or concerns please discuss them with your physiotherapist.

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