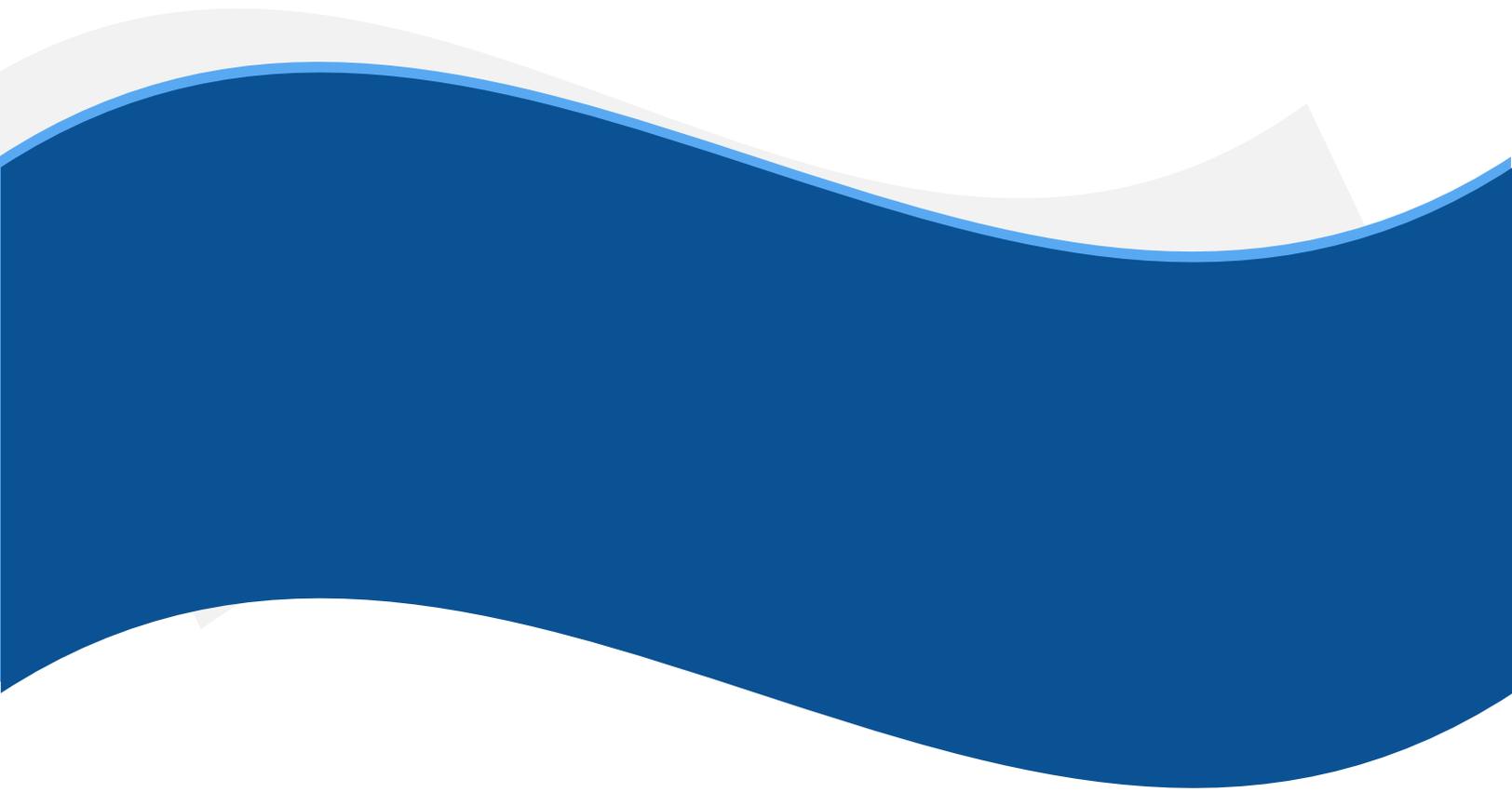




**THE THING ABOUT
TORTICOLLIS**

BY FREDERICK EARLSTEIN



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Got a Twisted Neck?



Torticollis occurs gradually due to hereditary factors. It could also occur suddenly as a result of trauma or injury. In some cases, this may also occur as a reaction to certain medications. Torticollis that is associated with a family history is also quite common. Initially, the neck starts twisting spasmodically and if left untreated, it can become permanent.

There are also some kinds of torticollis that develops when the head or neck twists excessively. When this condition happens, the person will most likely keep the head bent or straight to only one side due to pain because if the patient moves the neck towards the other side this can lead to extreme pain. The neck muscles that are affected on one side can also become painful. Usually, a medical exam is needed in order to examine the nerve functions so that the spinal cord injury can be ruled out.

What Kind of Torticollis Do You Have?



In most of the cases, torticollis occurs when a patient wakes up with a painful stiff neck with sharp pain particularly when they try to tilt or turn their head on one side. If you had torticollis, you might notice that your head is somehow tilted, turned and could even be shifted to just one side. For instance, you might have pain on the right side of your neck; so naturally, your head will be turned or tilted slightly towards the left side. If this is the case, tilting or turning your head on the right side can cause sharp and extreme pain; looking up or rotation your head could also be painful. There are different kinds of torticollis, see which ones best fits your condition:

Torticollis Type #1

The first type of torticollis usually has recurring contractions in the muscles of the neck particularly the sternocleidomastoid is known as spasmodic torticollis. This type is also known as are intermittent torticollis, cervical dystonia or idiopathic cervical dystonia, depending on the cause.

Torticollis Type #2



The second type of torticollis may not be linked with sternocleidomastoid muscle and it's also not something that's caused by damaging the trochlear nerve; the trochlear nerve

supplies the superior oblique muscle in the eye. Superior oblique muscles engage in depression, abduction, and intrusion eyes. This is why the patient will eventually have vision problems unless they turn their heads far from the affected side, which can cause eye introspection and thus balances their eyes out. This can be diagnosed using a certain head test wherein the head is directed to the affected side.

Torticollis Type #3

The third type is when a skull base tumor may suppress the nerve supply to the neck and eventually cause this type of torticollis. Posterior pharyngeal infections can irritate the nerves that supply the neck muscles which may also cause torticollis. Such

infections can easily be treated with antibiotics if it's not too severe but it may also require some form of debridement in some cases.

Torticollis Type #4

The fourth type of torticollis is when it requires as urgical removal of the thyroid and also ear infection can cause a syndrome which is the subluxation of the upper cervical joint due to the inflammation of the ligaments that's caused by an infection. The use of certain drugs like antipsychotics can also cause this type of torticollis.

Torticollis Triggers



Whether you're over – tired or may have partied and drank too much, you may experience your head or neck falling into a position during your sleep where you don't move for several hours. The worst possible sleeping position is when people sleep on their tummies with their head turned in ninety degrees towards just one direction just so they can breathe. Below are some triggers of torticollis that you need to be aware of:

Trigger #1

This type of trigger usually happens during hot summer months. People usually sleep with their windows open so that air will circulate but then a couple of hours when the temperature drops the neck muscles tend to become stiff and cramp up which could lead to a change in the neck reflexes and make it hard for the muscles to become loose later on.

Trigger #2

Some even have a shallow pillow or no pillow at all which can definitely cause the neck to become stiff. In the latter case, the neck will be tilted too sharply towards the bed. For instance, if the person sleeps on their left side with a shallow pillow then their joints on the left side will become jammed or freeze in that particular position. Meanwhile the soft tissues and muscles on the other side of the neck will be over – lengthened.

However, it can also happen whenever a person sleeps on their back with too many pillows that can cause their neck to be overly flexed while they sleep at night.

Trigger #3

In many cases, a person will say that they had done some sort of activity outside their normal routine the day before they woke up with a stiff neck. A common example is when people who are moving into their new homes, or whenever they do some gardening on that day; for some even just watching TV with their head turned in just one direction for a long period, or if they start a new exercise in the gym. Most of them don't feel any issues the day of but when they wake up the next morning, they start to feel the pain.

Types of Treatment for Torticollis



Treatment for torticollis is usually focused on relaxing the affected neck muscles. This can include surgery, medication, or physiotherapy. Most patients who suffer from torticollis usually recover in just a couple of weeks. However, they could still experience some form of neck problems after that. What patients can do is to do some stretches particularly in the area of the neck as it has been proven effective to provide relief from painful symptoms. Heat compress and massage can also treat torticollis and can help alleviate the pain.

Muscle spasms may also be alleviated by letting the patient wear a neck brace. There are cases when surgery is needed in order to treat the contracted neck muscle. This is done if other treatment methods are unsuccessful. The good thing is that torticollis is much easier to treat in kids.

TORTICOLLIS EXPLAINED

Did You Know?
Torticollis affects thousands of people! Are you one of them?

What is Torticollis?

It can be described by the neck's twisting to only one side. This can happen gradually and can be caused by genetic factors. It could also happen suddenly as a result of injury or trauma. In some cases, torticollis may also happen as a reaction to certain medications.

Causes of Torticollis

The causes of torticollis can come from the abuse of certain drugs such as prescription drugs, amphetamines, and cocaine. Such drugs can lead to dystonia or lack of control in the muscles. This disorder is described by a sudden involuntary movement of the back, facial and neck muscles. Tongue protrusion and also eye deviation may also happen. Acute torticollis is not usually a serious condition.

Symptoms

- weakness in the limbs
- swallowing difficulties
- breathing trouble
- a tingling sensation in the limbs
- speech impairment
- difficulty while walking

Treatment

A few days is usually enough to ease the pain. Chronic pain treatment often includes analgesia, physiotherapies like neck stretching, neck exercises or neck massage. If the patient exhibits torticollis, by definition, it will appear that their head is flexed to the painful side to a certain point, and at the same time will also be turned away from the painful area.

Torticollis Explained by Frederick Earlestein is a medical education guide to provide an understanding of Torticollis including the associated disorders, medical definition, management, and more!

Want to know more tips on how to manage Torticollis?
VISIT US AT WWW.TORTICOLLISEXPLAINED.COM

Treatment #1

Chronic pain treatment often includes analgesia, physiotherapies like neck stretching, neck exercises or neck massage. If the patient exhibits torticollis, by definition, it will appear that their head is flexed to the painful side to a certain point, and at the same time will also be turned away from the painful area.

Treatment #2

One of the first indications is when a person is aware of is the sudden pain on one side of the neck, often severe and lower in the neck. Nerve root problems are usually somewhat slower in onset but if the symptoms presented on waking this could be the diagnosis. The outcome is very likely to be just as good as the muscle or joint strain which is more common, but recovery typically takes longer over a period of weeks.

Treatment #3

The most common physiotherapy management includes ice, use of a collar if indicated, and also a gentle tractioning of the neck relax the neck muscles and settle pain. For example, you might have pain on the right side of your neck and are tilted and turned slightly towards the left. In this case, turning or tilting your head right would cause excruciating sharp pain and looking up would be painful as well.

Treatment #4

Physical therapy usually includes a technique called neuromuscular re-education; after a therapist does a passive range of motion in the pain – free areas, they can then use other techniques that involve a gentle isometric contraction away or into the side of where the pain is occurring. The treatment usually reproduces the pain being felt because in effect it sort of reset the normal muscle reflexes just like how a computer needs to be rebooted when something goes wrong. Other helpful modalities may include ice, heat, ultrasound, and traction.

Treatment #5

A chiropractor can help with it but it can be quite hard to receive any adjustment even if for the most part you're already used to getting by a chiropractor on normal days unless of course the physiotherapy involves resetting muscle reflexes and range of motion first. If not then the tendency is that the muscles will fight the adjustment. There are various physical therapists that initially perform various physiotherapies before pre – positioning the head in various positions in order to see which could be the most comfortable for muscle adjustment.

If there's no possible position where sharp pain is not eliminated then the therapist should either use an adjusting tool that has a light force which is also called an

activator, or don't adjust the person at that time. When a patient is able to handle an adjustment, the patient could experience a sharp pain followed by an instant feeling of relief in the muscles. Usually after more than three treatments, the joints will be well enough to make the muscles calm down on their own. The patient will then be able to function more normally.

Conclusion



If you are experiencing torticollis, then it only means that one or more small joints at the back of your neck which is known as facet joints become locked or jammed. The small supportive muscles of the neck are often controlled by the muscles with unconscious reflexes but you won't know about this until you experience this condition. These reflexes contract and hold the joint in a protective manner to avoid further joint damage.

There's also a swelling reaction around the joint. When there's a prolonged contraction and swelling causes the pain. However, there's a catch, the joints won't be able to normally move because the muscles are holding its position, and the muscles won't loosen up because they feel that the joints are out of position. Make sure to consult your doctor if you've been experiencing a "twisted neck."

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About

Retired high school biology teacher Frederick Earlstein lives to research. When his only niece was diagnosed with postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS) at age 14, Earlstein felt helpless. His answer was to start researching the condition and sharing everything he learned with his sister and her family. That project not only resulted in a book on the subject, but also to the successful management of the girl's condition.

Earlstein applied the same approach to his own minor problems with blood pressure, allergies, and degenerative disc disease. "It's all about critical mass," he says. "When the notes on my laptop and those piled up on my actual desktop reach a certain level, I start realizing there's a book in there somewhere."

Writing about medical issues in plain English has become Earlstein's second career. After retiring from his career as an educator, he began looking around for something to occupy his time. "You can only clean out the garage so many times," he said. "I was trained to be an academic and old habits die hard."

Now Earlstein works daily in his home office on whatever manuscript he has at hand. He describes the work as the perfect combination of intellectual challenge and self-employment. "I decide what to write about and when to write it," Earlstein says. "Typically I pick a subject because I know someone who is grappling with the problem and with understanding the information they're being given."

A firm believer in the power of informed consent, Earlstein is appalled by how difficult the medical community makes it for the average person to really understand a condition and make good treatment choices. "There's no reason why this material can't be presented in plain English," he says. "You just have to make an effort to really understand what you're talking about."

Although Earlstein makes no claims of being a doctor himself, he does feel he has a good role as an interpreter. "I don't write about any condition until I've studied the material and have a good handle on the mechanics of the problem or the illness," he said. "I'm not shy about calling up a doctor or surgeon and asking questions."

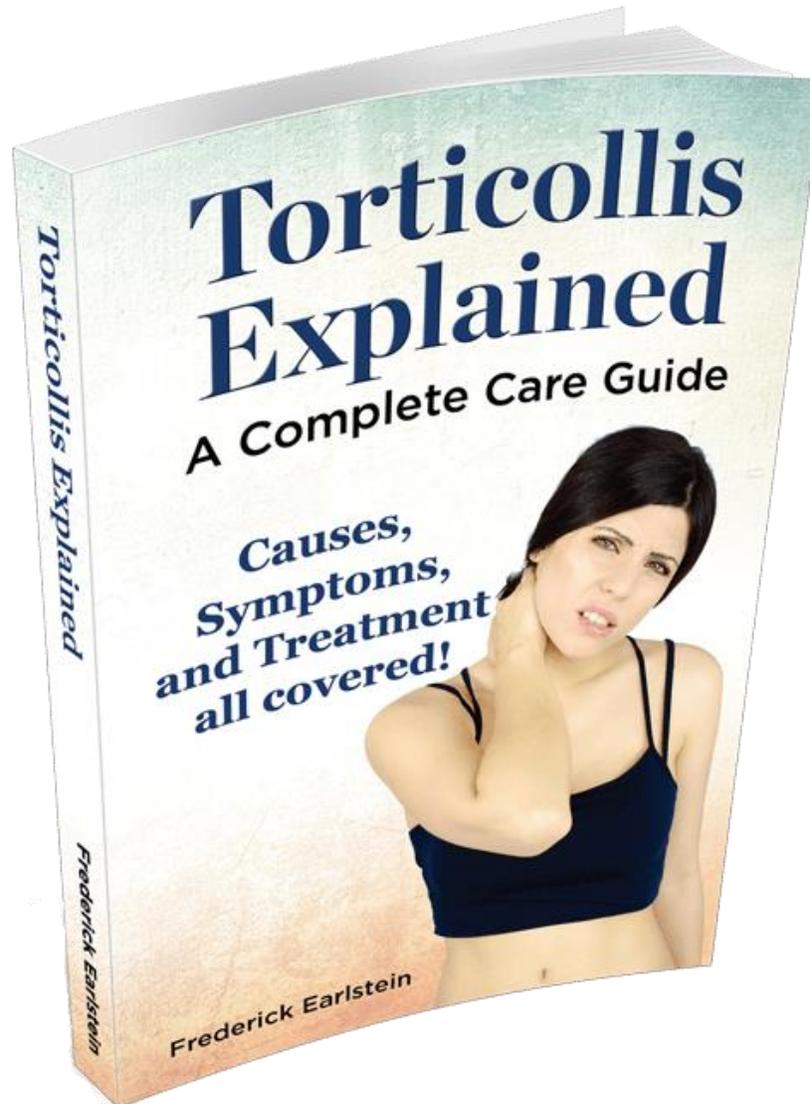
Recently, when his eye doctor told him he was suffering from eye strain, Earlstein immediately began to research the condition. "I knew I had been staring at the computer a lot," Earlstein said. "I didn't know that just getting lightly tinted lenses in my glasses could help. I'm still gathering information and yes, there's a book in the works."

When asked if he prefers writing over teaching, Earlstein makes it very clear that in his mind, he's still a teacher. "I'm just using a different method," he says. "One where I don't have to listen to the snores if I put anyone to sleep!"



Frederick Earlstein

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