Neck Surgery From the Front: ACDF and Cervical Disc Replacement

One-page summary of the full Spinemathema guide. Scan the QR code for the full guide, with references and audio.

Key points

- Both operations go in through a short cut in the front of the neck to free a trapped nerve or the spinal cord.
- ACDF removes the disc and lets the bones knit together. Disc replacement fits an artificial disc that keeps some movement.
- BASS reports good relief of arm pain in about 85 to 90% of people; neck pain is less predictable.
- Most people go home the next day. A sore throat and awkward swallowing are common. For most people this settles over days to weeks, but in one study of 249 patients about half still had some swallowing difficulty at one month, falling to about 1 in 8 at a year.

Contact your team or seek urgent help if you notice:

- Swelling in the neck with difficult or noisy breathing: call 999.
- New weakness or numbness in your arms or legs, difficulty walking, or loss of bladder or bowel control: go to A&E or call 999.
- A painful, swollen calf, or sudden chest pain or breathlessness: call 999.
- Swallowing that is getting worse, redness or leakage at the wound, clear fluid from the wound with headaches, or a high temperature: contact your hospital team or GP, or call NHS 111.

Not sure how urgent it is? Call NHS 111. More warning signs: spinemathema.com/warning-signs

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General information only, not personal medical advice.
If you are worried about your symptoms, contact your GP, NHS 111, or in an emergency call 999.

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