



What is a Musculoskeletal Disorder?

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) are injuries or disorders to the muscles, nerves, bones, tendons, joints, cartilage, or spinal discs. Common examples of MSDs may be;

- Sprains, strains or tears
- Back pain
- Arthritis
- Tendinitis

What are the symptoms of MSDs?

- Recurrent pain – commonly in joints or muscles and associated with movement
- Stiff Joints – commonly in the morning or after prolonged rest
- Swelling – commonly following long periods of repetitive use
- Dull Aches – this can cover large areas like your back and can occur even at rest

Which areas are affected?

They can affect any major area of your musculoskeletal system, including:

- Neck
- Shoulder
- Knees
- Back
- Feet



In some cases the symptoms lead to severe impact on normal activities such as walking or lifting items overhead

What is the cause of MSDs?

Most often there is not one single cause of an MSD, but a number of different factors that contribute to them occurring:

- Age – as we get older the natural changes in our bodies mean we can be more susceptible
- Occupation – studies have shown an increased prevalence in those who work in heavy or repetitive jobs
- Activity level – those who are less active outside of work are more likely to experience MSDs
- Lifestyle – mental health, sleep, diet and well being all play a big part in the cause of MSDs

What can I do to help?

Your risk of developing MSDs increases with age, but that does not mean they are inevitable. By identifying signs and symptoms early you can get the right advice and treatment to help resolve the disorder and reduce its impact. By getting seen by a physiotherapist early on the conditions are:

- Easier to treat and will resolve quicker
- Unlikely to lead to sickness and reduced function
- Prevent chronicity

If you would like more specific advice on musculoskeletal health or feel you may be suffering from an MSD, speak to your Perennial Advisor or Caseworker who can refer you to Connect Health's Physiotherapy Service