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LIBRARY FOR PEOPLE



World's largest FREE health Education library for people..

We help patients to become better patients! We can help you understand your health and medical problems better so you can get better care in partnership with your Doctor.

#### OUR VISION

We think patients are the largest untapped healthcare resource and that Information therapy is the most Powerful Medicine !

#### OUR GOALS

1. Encouraging health insurance companies to invest in patient education.
2. Advocating information therapy.
3. Setting up a national network of patient education centers.
4. Developing patient educational materials in Indian Languages for the web.

For more information on this subject:  
Ask the Librarian : Free Answers to any Health Questions !!

<http://www.healthlibrary.com/information.htm>

**For More Info: ASK A LIBRARIAN**



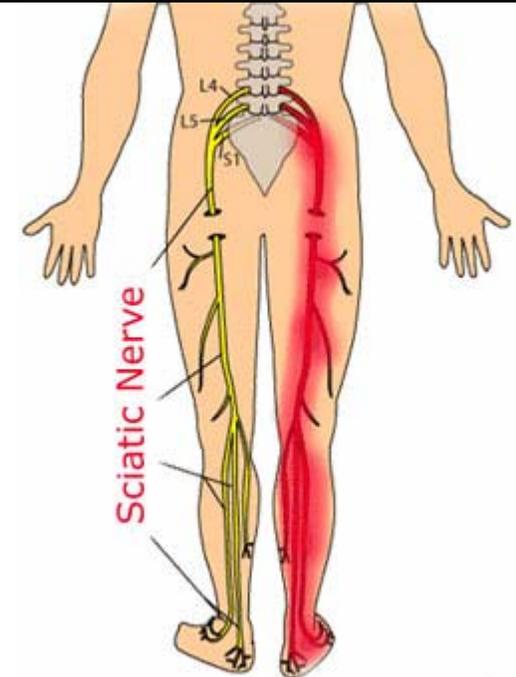
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## SCIATICA



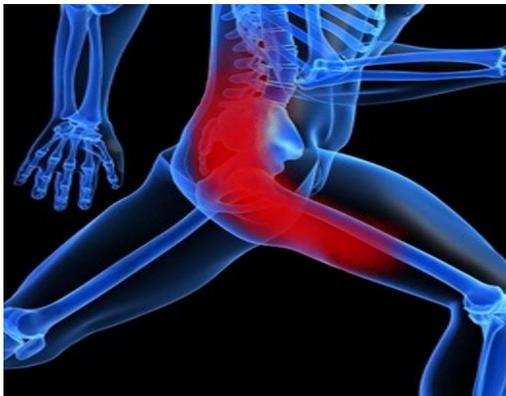
**LET'S HELP  
ERADICATE  
IGNORANCE**

## Introduction

Sciatica is a condition involving pain, weakness, numbness, or tingling in the leg. It is caused by injury to or compression of the sciatic nerve.

## Causes

Sciatica is a form of peripheral neuropathy. It occurs when there is damage to the sciatic nerve, located in the back of the leg. This nerve controls the muscles of the back of the knee and lower leg and provides sensation to the back of the thigh, part of the lower leg and the sole of the foot. Incomplete damage to the sciatic nerve may appear identical to damage to one of the branches of the sciatic nerve (tibial nerve dysfunction or common peroneal nerve dysfunction).



A problem in a single nerve group, such as the sciatic nerve, is classified as a mononeuropathy. The usual causes are direct trauma (often due to an injection into the buttocks), prolonged external pressure on the nerve, and pressure on the nerve from nearby body structures. It can also be caused by entrapment - pressure on the nerve where it passes through a narrow

structure. The damage slows or prevents conduction of impulses through the nerve.

The sciatic nerve is commonly injured by fractures of the pelvis, gunshot wounds, or other trauma to the buttocks or thigh. Prolonged sitting or lying with pressure on the buttocks may also injure it. Systemic diseases, such as diabetes, can typically damage many different nerves, including the sciatic nerve. The sciatic nerve may also be harmed by pressure from masses such as a tumor or abscess, or by bleeding in the pelvis. In many cases, no cause can be identified.

Note: A ruptured lumbar disk in the spine may cause symptoms that simulate the symptoms of sciatic nerve dysfunction

## Signs and Symptoms

Sensation changes, Of the back of the calf or the sole of the foot, Numbness, decreased sensation, Tingling, burning sensation, Pain, may be severe, Abnormal sensations, Weakness of the knee or foot, Difficulty walking, Inability to move the foot (in severe cases). Inability to bend the knee (in severe cases)

## Treatment and Management

Treatment is aimed at maximizing mobility and independence. The cause of the nerve dysfunction should be identified and treated as appropriate. In some cases, no treatment is required and recovery is spontaneous.



Conservative treatment is usually appropriate if there was sudden onset,

minimal sensation changes, no difficulty in movement, no history of trauma to the area, and no evidence of degeneration of the nerve axon.

Surgical removal of lesions that press on the nerve, such as a herniated disk, may relieve symptoms. In cases of severe injury to the nerve, such as laceration, recovery may be not possible or may be limited.

Injections can be used to reduce inflammation around the nerve. Over-the-counter or prescription analgesics may be needed to control nerve pain.

Various other medications may reduce the stabbing under the physician advice. Steroids may help with nerve inflammation related to a herniated disk. Whenever possible, their use should be avoided or minimized to reduce the risk of medication side effects.

Physical therapy exercises may be appropriate for some people to maintain muscle strength. The use of braces, splints, orthopedic shoes, or other appliances may help compensate for lost or impaired function.

## Prevention

Prevention varies depending on the cause of the nerve damage. Avoid prolonged sitting or lying with pressure on the buttocks.

