

Cauda Equina warning signs



Orthopaedic Assessment Service and Community Physiotherapy Service

Patient Information Leaflet

Have you been suffering from low back pain?

Your orthopaedic practitioner or physiotherapist will have explained your condition to you. You may be currently having treatment, undergoing investigations or waiting for an appointment with your consultant.

Hopefully, your symptoms can be managed and your low back pain will improve or completely go away.

Occasionally, symptoms may become worse. If this is the case, you will need to monitor your symptoms. This is because in rare cases, some people can develop a condition known as Cauda Equina Syndrome.

What is Cauda Equina Syndrome?

Cauda Equina Syndrome (CES) is a rare condition that is usually a surgical emergency. In patients with CES, something presses on a bundle of spinal nerve roots called Cauda Equina. These nerves are at the lower end of the spinal cord. They send and receive messages to and from your legs, feet, and pelvic organs.

If you have CES, you may need fast treatment to prevent lasting damage that could lead to incontinence, and possibly permanent paralysis of the legs.

The following are Red Flag warning signs for CES:



- Loss of feeling or pins and needles between your inner thighs or genitals
- Numbness in or around your back passage or buttocks
- Altered feeling when using toilet paper to wipe yourself
- Difficulty when you try to pass urine
- Loss of sensation (feeling) when you pass urine
- Leaking urine or recent need to use pads
- Difficulty in stopping or controlling your flow of urine
- Not knowing when your bladder is either full or empty
- Cannot stop a bowel movement or leaking from your bowels
- Loss of sensation when you pass a bowel motion
- Change in ability to achieve an erection or ejaculate
- Loss of sensation in genitals during sex

Any combination or number of these warning signs could be symptoms of Cauda Equina Syndrome. You will need to seek emergency medical help within 12 to 24 hours.

Who do I contact?

Go to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).

You will need to have an MRI scan and see a consultant. Take this leaflet with you and tell the Emergency Department what symptoms you have.

Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following:

Arthritis Research UK Back Pain Booklet 2014 available at:

<http://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/conditions/back-pain.aspx>

or telephone: 0300 790 0400

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Orthopaedic Assessment Service or Physiotherapy Service
Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre
Venture Way
Brierley Hill
DY5 1RU

Orthopaedic Assessment Service: 01384 321324 or 01384 321423
(8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Physiotherapy Service: 01384 321605 (8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Or your named orthopaedic practitioner or physiotherapist
on.....

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/orthopaedic-assessment-service-community/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

References

Please contact the Patient Information Officer at patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk if you would like a list of references for this document.

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔