

Back Pain and Cauda Equina Syndrome

Chronic Pain Management Service

Introduction

This leaflet has been developed to increase awareness of Cauda Equina Syndrome including signs and symptoms.

What is Cauda Equina Syndrome?

Cauda Equina Syndrome is uncommon but serious neurological condition affecting the Cauda Equina. Cauda Equina is located at the end of the spinal cord above the waist. These are a group of nerves that leave the spinal cord between spaces in the bones of the spine to connect to other parts of the body called the Cauda Equina. These nerves supply the muscles that control the bladder, bowel and legs and the skin from the groin and buttocks down to and including the feet.

Cauda Equina Syndrome occurs when this group of nerves are compressed. The most common cause of compression is when a disc in the lower back occupies the same space as the nerves. Any delay in the diagnosis of Cauda Equina Syndrome can impact recovery and could lead to permanent damage, such as bladder and bowel incontinence or paralysis of the legs.

Cauda Equina Syndrome warning signs

Any of the warning signs below, or a combination, could be symptoms of Cauda Equina Syndrome.

If you are experiencing any of these warning signs, please seek help immediately by going to your local Emergency Department.

- A recent onset of significant pain and/or a feeling of pins and needles / numbness in both legs
- Loss of feeling / pins and needles between your inner thighs or genitals
- Numbness in or around your back passage or buttocks
- An altered feeling when using toilet paper to wipe yourself
- Increasing difficulty when you try to urinate
- Increasing difficulty when you try to stop or control your flow of urine
- Loss of sensation when you pass urine
- Leaking of urine or recent use of pads
- Not knowing when your bladder is either empty or full
- Inability to stop a bowel motion or leaking

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- **Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available**
- **If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111**
- **Keep the environment clean and tidy**
- **Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.**

- Loss of sensation when you pass a bowel motion
- Change in ability to achieve an erection or ejaculate
- Loss of sensation in genitals during sexual intercourse

Please attend your local emergency department.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。