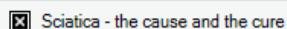


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Sciatica - the cause and the cure

What it is Sciatica is the name people give to a pain in the buttock, leg or foot brought on as a direct result of some form of irritation to the sciatic nerve. The sciatic nerve is the longest nerve in the body. It runs all the way from the lower back splitting at the base of the spine and terminating in the foot.

 Sciatica - the cause and the cure

Recent studies have shown that bed rest is not necessarily the best way to treat sciatica. It is better to remain active, starting off with some gentle stretching and exercise. Swimming is particularly useful, as it is not a weight bearing exercise. The good news is that herniated spinal discs usually do heal on their own, given time.

Stretching and exercising are a must if you really want to progress along the road to rehabilitation and if you are in extreme pain this is probably the last thing you will contemplate doing.

The spine is made up of a series of connected bones called "vertebrae." Spondylolisthesis or isthmic spondylolisthesis occurs when a cracked vertebra slips over the vertebra below it. Poor posture and curvature of the back or weak abdominal muscles can contribute to this slippage, which can press on the nerve. The presence of this spondylolysis usually does not represent a dangerous condition in the adult and most treatments concentrate on pain relief and increasing the patient's ability to function.

Causes While **sciatica** is most commonly a result of a disc herniation directly pressing on the nerve, any cause of irritation or inflammation of this nerve can reproduce the symptoms of **sciatica**. These causes include irritation of the nerve from adjacent bone, tumors, muscle, internal bleeding, infections, injury, and other causes.

Are you one of the millions of people who experience nerve pain from sciatica? If so, you know how painful this condition can be. **Sciatica** pain actually refers to the pain that radiates along the sciatic nerve. This pain is typically felt in the buttocks, down the legs, and in upper thighs.

Since getting mobile and becoming flexible is extremely important you might require some pain management to help you get going. For mild cases of sciatica your doctor may start off by recommending non prescription medications like aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen, known as non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs. A downside of these drugs is that they may cause stomach upsets or bleeding.

A primary cause of sciatica is a herniated or bulging lower lumbar intervertebral disk that compresses one of the nerve roots before it joins the sciatic nerve. Sometimes, irritation of a branch of the sciatic nerve in the leg can be so severe as to set up a reflex pain reaction involving the entire length of the nerve. For example, if the nerve is pinched or irritated near the knee, you may feel the pain in the hip and buttock.

This information in this article should not be used to diagnose, treat, or prevent any disease. You should always consult with your health care professional especially relating to the suitability of supplements or drugs and on all health matters that may require diagnosis or medical attention. If you suffer from progressive weakness in the leg or bladder or bowel incontinence this constitutes a medical emergency and you should seek immediate medical attention - you may have cauda equina syndrome a serious condition due to compression of the nerve roots in the lower end of the spinal canal.

Sciatica pain can be eliminated from your life there are numerous treatments for it, you will need to experiment to find out the best treatment or treatments for you particular condition.

The interesting thing about SNP is that it is not a diagnosis, but a symptom of another problem, usually a compressed nerve. So, if that is the case, what exactly causes SNP?

Piriformis syndrome is a condition in which the piriformis muscle irritates the sciatic nerve. The piriformis muscle is a small muscle behind the gluteus maximus. Piriformis syndrome is most common among women, runners and walkers.

* Spinal Stenosis. Sciatica nerve pain can also be cause by the narrowing of the spinal canal due to spinal stenosis. This condition can be caused by aging, trauma, or heredity.

* Degenerative Disc Disease. Degenerative Disc Disease may also be a cause of sciatica pain. This condition irritates the nerve root. * Piriformis Syndrome. Although not as common as a herniated disk, Piriformis syndrome can also be a cause of sciatica nerve pain. Runners, cyclists, or people who stand with their toes outward tend to develop this syndrome.

Spinal stenosis is the name given to the narrowing of the nerve channel (vertebral canal) of the spine. This narrowing causes compression of either the spinal cord within the vertebral canal, or the nerve roots that exit the spinal cord. People with spinal stenosis experience sciatic pain symptoms in the legs and feet. It usually results from degenerative arthritis causing a narrowing of the spaces in the vertebral canal. Manual workers are more prone to developing symptoms of spinal stenosis but it seldom affects people under 30 years of age - unless it is due to traumatic injury to the vertebrae.

Sciatica is usually caused by a prolapsed or 'slipped' disc bulging and pressing on to a nerve. It doesn't usually cause permanent nerve damage since the spinal cord is not present in the lower part of the spine and a prolapsed or herniated disc in this area does not pose a risk of paralysis.

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Neil_Jones

Back Problems Leading To Sciatica Pain Often people ignore back and leg pains until they become severe enough to merit attention. While not all back pains or leg pains will be serious and can be treated easily, some may require extended medical treatment. If you are suffering from leg pain and possibly some numbness or weakness that starts from the low back, through the buttock and down your leg, you could be suffering from sciatica. Usually, large majorities of people who do experience sciatica get better in time but it is always best to get medical treatment and undergo therapy in time. What is **Sciatica**? **Sciatica** is usually the condition caused by irritation to the sciatic nerves. Sciatic Nerves are one of the largest in our bodies and start from the base of the lumbar spine. They run through either side, through the buttocks and then down the legs, going all the way to the feet. If the roots of these sciatic nerves are pinched, pain is felt not only in the back but also the buttocks and lower legs. What Are the Symptoms of Sciatica? When the sciatica nerve root gets compressed, pain starts affecting all the areas that the nerve runs through. The pain could be dull or even sharp at times, at times there is just a burning feeling. This is usually accompanied by some shooting pain starting in the buttock going down the leg or the back of the thigh. At times, rather than actual pain, there is just a tingling or sense of numbness. It may prove to be difficult to stand up and even coughing or sneezing aggravates the pain. What Are the Problems Causing **Sciatica** Pain? Most of the times, sciatica is caused by what is commonly referred to as "slipped disc". The disc in this case refers to the discs that form part of our spine and act as shock absorbers for all the heavy work that the spine has to do. When we bend or twist, the pressure on these discs increases. At times, when there is a sudden, violent twisting movement or one is carrying a very heavy load that adds tremendously to the pressure on the discs, the soft center in the discs pushes through the outer cover. This bulge then starts to press against the sciatic nerve roots nearby causing pain, numbness and a general sense of weakness in the limbs. There are other causes that could lead to irritation or compression of the sciatic nerve leading to sciatic pain. These include aging, which causes part of the spine to become rough and enlarged. At times, though very rarely, infections and tumors could be found to cause the problems. How can Sciatica Pain be treated? Most **sciatica** pain can be treated with simple painkillers or anti-inflammatory medications, followed by physical therapy and rest. Only in very severe cases, is surgery suggested as a remedy for sciatica pain. If you are suffering from lower back pain or leg pain, seek advice from your doctor and treat **sciatica** immediately for early relief. For more tips visit <http://www.gasmileagesecrets.org>

Causes The sciatic nerve is the largest nerve in the human body. It runs from your pelvis all the way down to the back of your legs. This nerve provides feelings to your legs, feet and thighs. So, when this nerve is compressed, the pain is likened to an electrical shock. Some of the causes of nerve pain include the following:

In extreme cases spinal injections of corticosteroid into the epidural space (the area around the spinal nerves) or facet joint (between vertebrae) may be given. This is usually carried out by a specialist with follow up injections at a later date.

The cause The most common cause of sciatica is a prolapsed (slipped) disc, pinched nerves or some form of arthritis. It usually starts with back pain which sometimes improves only to be followed by hamstring or calf pain. It may also include numbness in the toes depending on which branch of the sciatic nerve is irritated.

The term sciatica describes the symptoms of leg pain and possibly tingling, numbness or weakness that travels from the low back through the buttock and down the large sciatic nerve in the back of the leg. The vast majority of people who experience sciatica get better with time (usually a few weeks or months) and find pain relief with non-surgical **sciatica** treatment. For others, however, sciatica can be severe and debilitating.

How to Treat Sciatica Nerve Pain When you doctor knows what the cause of your sciatica pain is, he or she can better treat it. Most cases of SNP are treated with conservative or non-surgical methods, like over-the-counter medications, rest, or cold and heat therapy.

The Cure Some cases of sciatica which result from inflammation get better with time and heal themselves perhaps within six weeks to three months.

For those who experience severe nerve pain and/or incontinence, surgery may be the only option. Almost 80 percent of people suffer from lower back pain, with or without **sciatica**, so talk to your doctor to learn more about the causes of **sciatica**, or hop online and check out The Sciatica Clinical website.

Sciatic pain is usually nerve related and responds well to treatment with low doses of tricyclic anti-depressant drugs like amitriptyline, dothiepin, nortriptyline, lofepramine, desipramine, clomipramine or imipramine combined with acupuncture or the use of TENs machines. The low dosage of the tricyclic drug acts by closing "a pain gate" blocking the message to the brain.

Nerves are cord like structure which consist of several nerve fibres. Sciatic nerve is the largest nerve of our body which is also called as Great Nerve. It is around 2 cms in diameter. It arises from nerve (roots) plexus emerging from the sacrum (back part of hip bone). It comes out of the pelvis through greater sciatic foramen (opening) in the hip bone with piriformis muscle which unites hip joint and femur. From there it descends on the backside of the leg, deep into the gluteus muscles (buttock). It gives out branches tibial nerve and common peroneal nerve to supply medial and posterior aspect of leg.

Sciatica usually affects only one side of the lower body. Often, the pain extends from the lower back all the way through the back of the thigh and down through the leg. Depending on where the sciatic nerve is affected, the pain may also extend to the foot or toes.

About the Author:

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As a last resort you may consider surgery to remove fragments of the prolapsed disc are then removed. As I mentioned earlier it is important to stay active and continue with an exercise and stretching program. Especially do exercises to develop your back and stomach muscles. This will help stabilize your spine and support your body.

Other treatments to manage **sciatica** include traction; manipulation by a skilled osteopath, physio therapist or chiropractor; Chemonucleolysis (injection of a special enzyme into the disk).

Sciatica is pain that starts in the back and radiates down one of the legs. It is quite a common complaint and is **sciatica** is caused by pressure on the sciatic nerve which runs down into the leg. The medical term is acute nerve root compression. The cause of pressure can be varied from a Slipped (Prolapsed) disk to muscle tension (Piriformis syndrome) or something less common such as a tumors, bony growths and infections.

If your pain is not relieved by analgesics or NSAIDs, your doctor might prescribe narcotic analgesics (such as codeine) for a short time. Side effects of these include nausea, constipation, dizziness and drowsiness, and continued use may result in dependency.

Other medications like Corticosteroids taken orally or by injection are sometimes prescribed for more severe back and leg pain because of their very powerful anti-inflammatory effect. Corticosteroids also have side effects and the pros and cons of taking them should be fully discussed with your doctor.

* Herniated Disk. A herniated disk, otherwise known as a bulging disk, is the most common cause of sciatica nerve pain. When a lower lumbar intervertebral disk bulges, it oftentimes compresses one of the nerves roots before it joins the sciatic nerve. This tends to cause radiating pain into the buttocks and back of the thighs or calves. Numbness and burning are also symptoms, as well as pain.

It is also important to maintain a reasonable body weight, ensure you have a good posture, sleep on a mattress that is neither too soft nor too hard, be careful when bending or lifting heavy weights.

Bill Morrison has his own website <http://www.help4urback.com> where he describes his own personal experiences coping with lower back pain and sciatica. He also includes personal recommendations for people who suffer from sciatica or lower back pain including what books to buy, TENs machines, and what web sites to check out.

There are many different treatments for sciatica and it is important to discuss these with your health practitioner. Accurate diagnosis to determine the exact cause of sciatic pain is also equally important. The most conclusive diagnosis is usually gained by a having an MRI scan. However having said that skilled medical practitioners, and I include Osteopaths and Chiropractors, are often able to determine the suspected cause by carrying out a physical examination

Before reviewing specific sciatica exercises, it is first important to explain what sciatica is, as the term sciatica is often misused and its definition often misunderstood. Sciatica is a set of symptoms rather than a diagnosis in itself (meaning it does not explain the cause of the pain). Sciatica (radiculopathy) is a general term that refers to pain caused by compression or irritation of one or more nerves exiting the lower spine that make up the sciatic nerve, and there are a number of different conditions that can cause this.

The discs which cushion the vertebrae in the lower back become progressively thinner and harder as we get older. This stresses the lower back and often causes a variety of lower back pain disorders, including sciatica.

There is a fairly new procedure called IDET which stands for Iintro Discal Electrothermy). When a disc is herniated the water content of the inflamed disc causes it to bulge and press against the nerve. IDET dries up the disc very quickly, in less than 20 minutes, a process which might take weeks or months if left to dry up naturally

About the Author:

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