

Cauda Equina Syndrome

Patient Information

Common back pain

Many patients have a combination of back pain, leg pain, leg numbness and weakness. These symptoms can be distressing for you but don't necessarily require emergency medical attention. A rare but serious back condition, Cauda Equina Syndrome, can lead to permanent damage or disability and will need to be seen by an Emergency Specialist Spinal Team.

Cauda equina syndrome warning signs

- Loss of feeling/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
- 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 urine or recent need to use pads
- Not knowing when your bladder is either full or empty
- Inability to stop a bowel movement or leaking
- 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

If you have any combination of these symptoms, seek help immediately by attending your local Emergency Department.

Please watch this video for more information about serious causes of back and leg pain: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdlxfcJmn-4&t=121s>

Wording in this leaflet is copied with permission from the MACP Cauda Equina Syndrome reference card. The information is available in different languages from:
<https://www.eoemskservice.nhs.uk/advice-and-leaflets/lower-back/cauda-equina>

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Safeguarding

Wiltshire Health and Care (WHC) are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk of abuse, including victims and survivors of domestic abuse. We expect all WHC staff to share this commitment and promote safeguarding by implementing WHC policies and procedures, act promptly on concerns and share information appropriately.

If you or your carer have any concerns regarding a child or adult's safety, please phone Wiltshire Safeguarding Team on 0300 456 0111 (Adult) or 0300 456 0108 (Child) (9am – 5pm Monday - Friday) or please call 999 if you feel they are in immediate danger.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any questions, or concerns, suggestions or compliments about our service, please speak to a member of staff.

This information sheet is available in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 0300 123 7797 and whc.pals@nhs.net

Patient and Public Involvement

We value your opinions which will help us to further develop our services.

If you wish to provide feedback or get involved in our patient participation groups, please email the Patient and Public Involvement Officer at ask.wiltshirehealthandcare@nhs.net or telephone 01249 454386.