

Things To Know About Cauda Equina Syndrome

A bundle of nerve roots resembles a horse's tail and extends from the bottom of the spinal cord to the lower back bones (vertebrae) and to the bone at the base of the spine (sacrum).

When a herniated disc compresses the cauda equina, it causes pain, weakness, incontinence, and other symptoms. This is a medical emergency that needs to be treated immediately.

Causes

If you are having symptoms of cauda equina syndrome, it is best to go to the emergency department immediately. This is because the sooner the pressure on your nerve roots is reduced, the better chance you have of regaining control over your bladder and bowel functions.

There are several conditions that can cause the cauda equina to become compressed or damaged. These include herniated discs, spinal stenosis and tumors in the spine.

When one of these problems occurs, the pressure on your nerves can cause severe pain in your lower back, buttocks and into 1 or both legs. This pain can also be accompanied by numbness or weakness in these areas. If you choose to learn fruitful information on cauda equina syndrome, you must check here at <https://www.mrhsolicitors.co.uk/service/cauda-equina/> website.

Symptoms of the syndrome may be subtle or appear suddenly. In both cases, physicians look for the classic red flag symptoms - numbness and weakness in your legs, back pain and incontinence or retention of the bladder or bowels.

Symptoms

When a spinal disc presses on nerve roots in the cauda equina, this cuts off sensation and movement. Without treatment, it can lead to permanent leg weakness, bladder dysfunction (inability to empty the bowel), loss of sexual function and other complications.

The symptoms of cauda equina syndrome vary in severity, depending on the exact nerve roots that are being compressed. Symptoms often include severe low back pain, bowel and bladder incontinence, and motor weakness or sensory loss in both legs.

If the condition is new (acute), surgery is often required to make more space for the nerve roots. The surgical procedure is called lumbar decompression, and it can reduce the symptoms of cauda equina and increase your chance of regaining normal function.

In addition to a herniated disk, other causes of cauda equina can include spinal infections, tumors, and spine trauma. Failed back surgery can also result in cauda equina, as can arteriovenous malformations. These disorders disrupt blood flow to the spinal cord, causing damage.

Diagnosis

Cauda equina syndrome (CES) is an emergency that can be caused by a herniated disk, spinal cord tumor, infection, fracture or narrowing of the spinal canal. Early diagnosis is critical to prevent permanent problems.

Your doctor will ask about your symptoms and medical history. This will help them diagnose CES.

Symptoms of CES may vary in intensity and evolve slowly over time. These symptoms include pain, numbness and weakness in the legs and incontinence (the inability to pass urine).

A person with CES should be treated immediately, as it can lead to long-term problems if left untreated. Treatment usually includes surgery to move whatever is compressing the nerve roots so they can heal.

Early decompression surgery, called lumbar laminectomy, can relieve pressure on the cauda equina nerves. This can restore normal function to the lower extremities and prevent permanent damage like paralysis.

Treatment

The cauda equina is a collection of nerve roots that sit at the bottom of the spinal cord. These nerves send signals throughout your body to control the sensory and motor functions of your legs and bladder.

The symptoms of cauda equina syndrome are caused by pressure on these nerves. If left untreated, this can lead to permanent damage.

Surgery is sometimes recommended to relieve the pressure on your nerves and prevent the condition from progressing. This can help avoid paralysis and other long-term problems, such as bowel or bladder dysfunction.

Your neurosurgeon can diagnose the cause of your cauda equina by performing imaging studies, such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). If your doctor suspects that a herniated disc or tumor caused your nerves to become compressed, they may recommend surgery to remove the source of the pressure.

After surgery, patients typically need a short hospital stay to recover from the procedure. They also often need a course of physical therapy to regain strength in their lower limbs.