



PATIENT INFORMATION

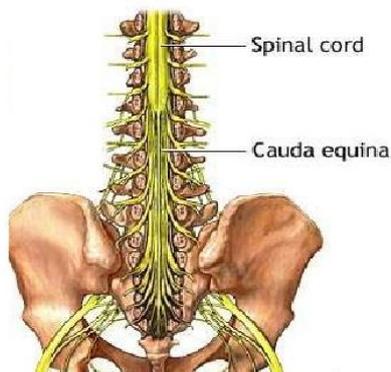
CAUDA EQUINA SYNDROME



You have been given this leaflet because you may be at risk of Cauda Equina Syndrome. It is very important that you read and understand this leaflet.

**Cauda Equina Syndrome is a rare but serious spinal condition.
It needs urgent medical examination and treatment**

CAUDA EQUINA



What is Cauda Equina Syndrome?

The spinal cord extends from the brain down through a canal inside the vertebral column (back bone). The spinal cord ends above the waist and continues as a group of nerves 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.

Causes:

Most common:

- Very large disc prolapse (Large “slipped disc”)
- Severe Spinal Stenosis (a severely narrowed spinal canal)

.Cauda Equina Syndrome is **rare** but occurs mainly in adults at any age.

Symptoms:

Cauda Equina Syndrome presents as one or a combination of the following symptoms and usually associated with an increase in back and leg pains:

Saddle Anaesthesia:

- Loss of feeling between the legs
- Numbness in or around the back passage and /or genitals
- Unable to feel the toilet paper when wiping

Bladder Disturbance:

- Inability/unable to urinate (pass water)
- Difficulty initiating urination (passing water)
- Loss of sensation when you pass urine
- Inability to stop passing urine (incontinence)
- Loss of full bladder sensation

Bowel disturbance

- Inability to stop a bowel movement (incontinence)
- Loss of sensation when passing a bowel motion

Sexual Problems (these problems do not usually occur on their own, but combined with bowel and/or bladder symptoms)

- Inability to achieve an erection or ejaculation
- Loss of sensation during intercourse

It is likely that you will have a combination of back pain, leg pain, leg numbness or weakness. These symptoms are common in people who have back problems **but do not** have Cauda Equina syndrome.

Investigations

A spinal scan (MRI) is arranged when Cauda Equina syndrome is suspected. The scan will confirm or rule out the condition and reveal whereabouts in the spine the problem lies. The scan also helps the clinician in planning appropriate treatment.

IF YOU SUDDENLY DEVELOP ANY OF THE SYMPTOMS LISTED ABOVE THEN IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU CONTACT:

YOUR GP AS AN EMERGENCY THAT DAY

OR

ATTEND AN ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AT YOUR LOCAL HOSPITAL

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PET@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.