



Sciatica is pain, weakness, numbness or tingling along the path of the sciatic nerve. The nerve starts in the lower back and runs down the back of each leg. The nerve controls the muscles in the lower leg and in the back of the knee, while also providing sensation to the back of the thigh, lower leg and the sole of your foot. Sciatica is a symptom of another medical condition. Generally, sciatica only affects one side of the body.

CAUSES

- Herniated or slipped disc
- Degenerative disc disease
- A pain disorder involving the narrow muscle in the buttocks (piriformis syndrome)
- Pelvic injury or fracture
- Pregnancy
- Tumor (rare)

SYMPTOMS

- Mild tingling or dull ache in the lower back, leg or hip
- Numbness in the back of the calf or sole of the foot
- Burning sensations in the lower back, leg or hip
- Sharp pains in the lower back, leg or hip
- Leg weakness
- Severe back pain preventing movement

TREATMENT

- Heat or ice to the affected area
- Medication
 - NSAIDS help decrease swelling, pain and fever. **ALWAYS ASK YOUR PROVIDER IF NSAIDS ARE SAFE.**
 - Acetaminophen to decrease pain
 - Prescription pain medicine
 - Muscle relaxant to control spasms
 - Steroid injections to lessen pain, irritation and inflammation around the nerve
 - Exercising and stretching to strengthen your abdomen and improve flexibility of your spine
 - Physical therapy
 - Surgery to eliminate what is pressing or pinching the nerve, such as a bone spur or part of a herniated disc

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Symptoms get worse or do not improve in two to four weeks, despite treatment.
- You develop new symptoms.
- You are generally not feeling well.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop numbness or weakness in either leg.
- You lose bowel or bladder function.