



Information for Patients

Cauda Equina Syndrome

Many patients develop back pain and may also have leg pain, leg numbness or weakness. These can be very distressing for you, but does not 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. Please take the time to read the warning signs below:

Cauda Equina 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

Any combination of these warning signs could be symptoms of Cauda Equina Syndrome. Seek emergency help immediately at your nearest A&E

For further information

Please email ghnt.newcastlegatesheadtims@nhs.net, ring on 0191 2138800 or visit our website at: www.tims.nhs.uk which provides online guidance and support on managing your musculoskeletal (MSK) condition effectively.

The NHS website also provides trusted online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare to help you manage your condition and/or inform your choices about your health: www.nhs.uk.

Useful links

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can offer on-the-spot advice and information about the NHS. You can contact them on freephone 0800 032 02 02 or e-mail northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk.

Acknowledgements: this information leaflet is referenced to work undertaken by DR Susan Greenhalgh, Chris Mercer and Laura Finucane © Bolton NHS Foundation Trust and University of Central Lancashire.