

# SCIATICA

Sciatica refers to pain that radiates along the path of the sciatic nerve, which branches from our lower back through our hips and buttocks and down each leg. Typically, sciatica affects only one side of our body.

Sciatica mostly occurs when a herniated disk, bone spur on the spine or narrowing of the spine compresses part of the nerve. This causes inflammation, pain and often some numbness in the affected leg.

## SYMPTOMS

Pain that radiates from lower (lumbar) spine to buttock and down the back of the leg is the hallmark of sciatica. Discomfort is felt almost anywhere along the nerve pathway.

The pain can vary widely, from a mild ache to a sharp, burning sensation or excruciating pain. Sometimes it can feel like a jolt or electric shock.

Some people also have numbness, tingling or muscle weakness in the affected leg or foot.

## RISK FACTORS

1. Age
2. Obesity
3. Prolonged sitting
4. Diabetes

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## TREATMENT

Although the pain associated with sciatica can be severe, most cases resolve with non-operative treatments in a few weeks. People who have severe sciatica that's associated with significant leg weakness or bowel or bladder changes might be candidates for surgery.

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