

Cauda Equina Syndrome – Important Warning Signs

Low back pain is a common condition in which many people can have a combination of back pain, leg pain, leg numbness and weakness. This can be distressing and painful but does not necessarily require emergency medical attention.

Cauda Equina Syndrome is a rare but serious spinal condition which if left untreated can lead to permanent damage or disability. The Cauda Equina is a group of spinal nerves that are responsible for controlling the bladder, bowel, lower limbs and also supplying the sensation to the skin around the back passage and genital area.

If you have noticed any of the warning signs listed below, since your low back and or leg pain has started or got worse, you should go to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department as soon as possible for a medical assessment.

Saddle Anaesthesia or Paraesthesia (loss of feeling or sensation)

- Loss of feeling and, or pins and needles between your back passage and genital area. For example, inability to feel the toilet paper when wiping yourself.

Changes to your Bladder

- Increasing difficulty when you try to initiate urination
- 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

Changes to your Bowel

- Inability to stop a bowel movement or recent leaking from back passage
- Loss of sensation when you pass a bowel motion

Sexual Problems

- Recent change in ability to achieve an erection
- Loss of sensation in genitals during sexual intercourse

