

Sciatica

Autumn is in full swing. People are out working in their gardens and raking leaves. With all of this extra work comes back pain and leg pain. Pain that starts with your low back and extends into one or both of your legs is called Sciatica. Many Americans experience it every year due to their traumatic lifestyle.

What is Sciatica?

Sciatica is a severe pain in the leg that is caused by irritation, compression, or inflammation of the sciatic nerve. The sciatic nerves are the largest and longest nerves in the body reaching the size of your finger and running down the back of your leg. Each of the sciatic nerves is made up of 5 spinal nerves that leave the low back and come together to form one nerve that travels down the back of the leg. The sciatic nerve travels to the toes, ankles, knees, calf and thigh. When the nerve is irritated, any or all of these areas can hurt.

Symptoms of Sciatica

The symptoms of Sciatica vary widely. The pain can be in one leg, both legs, or change from one side to another. Some people experience sharp “shooting pains” which run down the legs and into the toes. Some people experience dull aches and pains in the back, and other individuals have numbness throughout the leg. At times, the pains can be severe and debilitating for days. The pain may then subside for a few days, but has the potential to reappear and get much worse.

Many daily activities affect the pain intensity. Prolonged sitting when driving or working at a computer can increase the pain. Walking, bending, twisting, and running can cause the nerve to flair up as well. Sports should be avoided because of the twisting motion as this will cause an increase in pain levels.

Causes of Sciatica

There are many causes of Sciatica. One of the most common causes is because of a subluxation. A subluxation occurs when one or more of the low back bones “move out of place” or misalign, which causes pressure or pinching on the sciatic nerve roots. This type of Sciatica is easily treated by chiropractors, who specialize in treating subluxations. A disc herniation is another cause of Sciatica. Discs are the shock absorbing cushions which are located between the low back vertebra. When the disc becomes injured due to an accident or fall, the disc bulges out or herniates. When the disc herniates, it contacts the nerve and pinches it, which causes the nerve to fire causing Sciatica.

Many other causes have also been linked to this condition. Arthritis, car accidents, child birth, and pregnancy have all caused Sciatica. Years of poor posture, excessive weight, and poor muscle tone can allow small events, (such as bending over), to cause pain.

Treatment of Sciatica

The medical doctor may treat the symptoms of Sciatica with pain killers, muscle relaxants, or anti-inflammatory drugs. Physical therapy and nerve injections may also be tried. Surgery to decompress the nerve may be utilized if the case is considered severe.

Chiropractic is highly successful at relieving Sciatica. The chiropractor will find the source of the nerve irritation and relieve it. Treatment will vary according to the severity of the condition. With the majority of patients, a few gentle adjustments are all that is needed to relieve pressure off of the nerve.

Whatever the cause of your pain, do not wait to get it treated. The longer you wait, the harder it is to correct. Too many people wait to see if it will get better on its own only to find out that waiting has made the problem worse. Call Dr. Schipp at (270) 554-7661 to start treatment today.