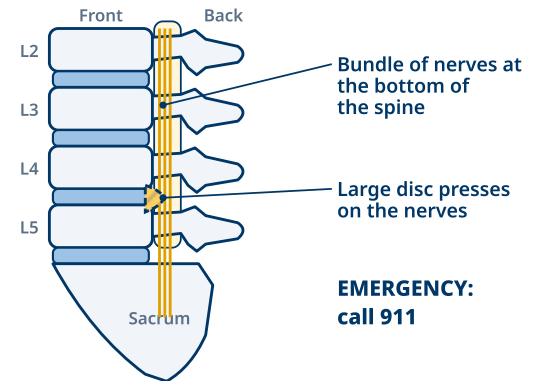


Cauda Equina Syndrome (Emergency)

What it is

Cauda equina syndrome is an emergency. The bundle of nerves at the bottom of the spine is squeezed. It can cause loss of bladder or bowel control and numbness in the groin. It needs care right away.



Common symptoms

- Numbness in the “saddle” area (groin, buttocks, inner thighs)
- New difficulty starting urination, or loss of bladder or bowel control
- Severe or worsening leg weakness or numbness, often both legs
- Sexual dysfunction of new onset
- Back pain and sciatica (may be present)

Self-care tips

- Do not wait to see if it gets better. Go to the emergency room.
- After treatment, follow your bladder and bowel care plan.
- Walk and move as your care team advises.
- Keep all follow-up visits.

What to expect at GSMC

At your visit: A spine specialist asks about your symptoms and checks your strength, feeling and walking.

Tests: You may need X-rays, an MRI or a CT scan.

Your plan: Many people start with care that does not involve surgery. Surgery is discussed only if it may help.

When to call us

- Any new numbness in the groin, buttocks or inner thighs
- New trouble passing urine, or leaking urine or stool
- Leg weakness that gets worse

This is an emergency. Call 911 or go to the emergency room right away. Do not wait for an office visit.

Call 732-202-3000

One number for all offices. Questions about this handout? We are glad to help.

Our 7 offices: Whiting · Toms River (Hooper Ave) · Brick · Barnegat · Manahawkin · Freehold · West Long Branch

gsmedicalcenter.org/services/spine/conditions/cauda-equina-syndrome/

This handout is general information and is not a substitute for medical advice.



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