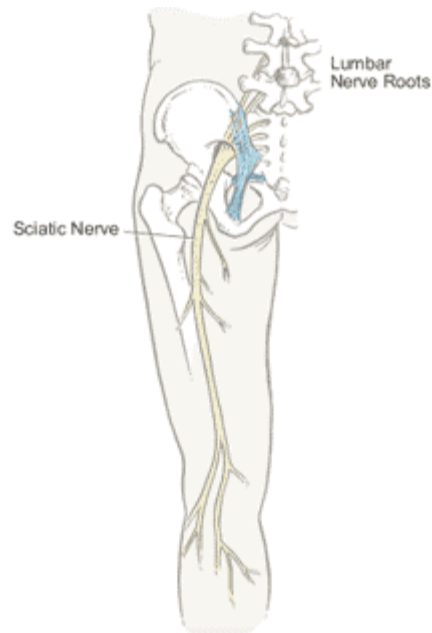


Sciatica

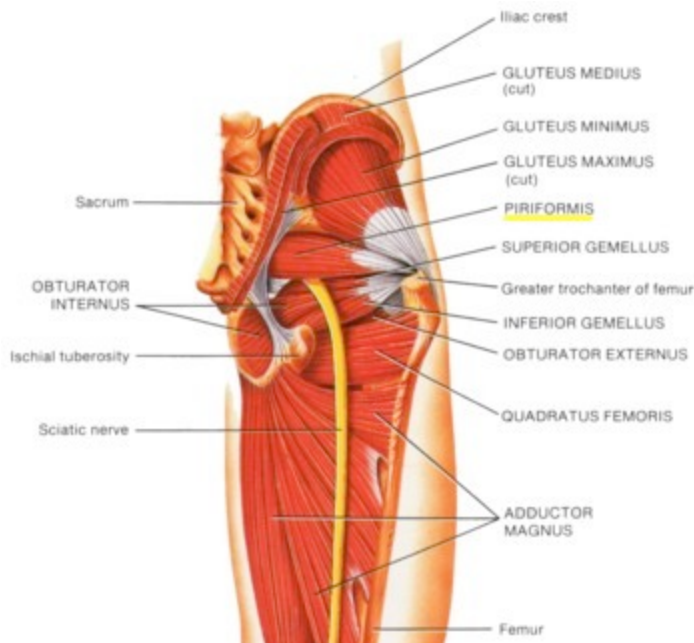
What is sciatica?

Sciatica is caused by irritation to the Tibial nerve. This is a large nerve that runs from the lumbar spine into the lower extremities. The common name for this nerve is the Sciatic Nerve. If the nerve is irritated it can cause nerve-like symptoms into the back portion of the lower extremity, commonly referred to as Sciatica. .



What are the Causes?

The irritation of the Tibial nerve can take place in the lumbar spine or gluteal musculature. However, sometimes irritation of the nerve root is caused by a herniated disc or foraminal stenosis. The gel-like center (nucleus) of a disk may protrude into or through the disk's outer lining. This herniated disk may press directly on the nerve roots that become the sciatic nerve. Nerve roots may also get inflamed and irritated by chemicals from the disk's nucleus. Another possible cause is the Piriformis that originates at the sacrum and attaches to the greater trochanter (the large bony notch on the side of your hip). When this muscle is tight or irritated it can affect the sciatic nerve because the sciatic nerve runs deep to the piriformis.



There have been several factors that put one at greater risk for getting sciatica. If you are between 30-50, if you are non-active, obese, have a physically demanding job, and/or poor health.

What are the Symptoms?

The symptoms of sciatica consist of pain originating in the back or gluteal region and radiates down the back of the leg into the foot. These symptoms are usually described as nerve-like, and may be described as burning, numbness, tingling or aches. It can be worse with prolonged postures, such as sitting.

Treatment

Treatment for this condition should always begin by seeing your physician or an orthopedic specialist. If you are experiencing muscle weakness please contact a specialist immediately. X-rays may be taken to see any degenerative changes in the bones of the spine. If more information is needed an MRI may be performed. The majority of patients experiencing sciatica will not require surgical intervention. In therapy, you will be evaluated as an individual to customize a plan of care to evaluate possible causes and mitigating factors of Sciatica . Some treatments may consist of manual traction, joint mobilizations, soft tissue mobilizations, prescribes therapeutic activity, postural education, activity modification instruction, and a comprehensive home exercise program. If none of these treatment options improve the symptoms, cortisone via an epidural injection, may be administered by your physician as a means to increase productivity in physical therapy and work related activity.

If you would like more information about this issue, or need a physician referral in your area, please call us at 310-860-9720.

