

# Cauda Equina Syndrome

Many patients have a combination of back pain, leg pain, leg numbness and/or weakness. These symptoms can be distressing for you but do not necessarily require emergency medical attention. However, there is a rare but serious back condition called **Cauda Equina Syndrome**. This can quickly lead to permanent damage or disability and therefore needs to be assessed by an Emergency Specialist Spinal Team within a few hours of onset.

Known signs and symptoms of **Cauda Equina Syndrome** are listed below:

Loss of feeling and/or pins and needles between your inner thigh or of your genitals

Numbness in or around your back passage or buttocks

Altered feeling when using toilet paper to wipe yourself

Increasing difficulty when you try to urinate

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 for pads

Not knowing when your bladder is either full or empty

Inability to stop a bowel movement or leaking

Loss of sensation when you pass a bowel motion

Change in ability to achieve an erection or ejaculate

Loss of sensation in genitals during sexual intercourse

**If any number of these symptoms have suddenly appeared you must go immediately to your local Accident & Emergency Unit for urgent assessment**

If you need to view these signs and symptoms in a different language please visit <https://www.eoemskservice.nhs.uk/advice-and-leaflets/lower-back/cauda-equina> for 28 different translations (Copyright: Dynamic Health 2019)