

- Leaking urine or recent need to use pads
- Inability to stop a bowel movement or leaking from bowel
- 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

We kindly acknowledge Dr Susan Greenhalgh and Professor James Selfe for the information contained on this card.

PI23/1968/03
Review: June 2025

Low back pain



University Hospitals Birmingham
NHS Foundation Trust

Many patients have a combination of back pain, leg pain, leg numbness or weakness. These symptoms can be distressing for you but do not necessarily require emergency medical attention. Sometimes a rare but serious condition called Cauda Equina Syndrome can develop and lead to permanent nerve damage and disability.

Cauda Equina Syndrome warning signs

Any combination or number of these warning signs could be symptoms of cauda equina syndrome.

Seek emergency medical help within 12 to 24 hours if you have any combination of these:

- Loss of feeling or pins and needles between your inner thighs or 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 or when you try to stop or control your flow of urine
- Loss of sensation when you pass urine
- Not knowing when your bladder is full or empty

List continued on next side