



[Home](#) → [Health Topics](#) → [Spinal Cord Diseases](#)

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/spinalcorddiseases.html>

Spinal Cord Diseases


Your spinal cord is a bundle of nerves that runs down the middle of your back. It carries signals back and forth between your body and your brain. It is protected by your vertebrae, which are the bone disks that make up your spine. If you have an accident that damages the vertebrae or other parts of the spine, this can also **injure**

[\[https://medlineplus.gov/spinalcordinjuries.html\]](https://medlineplus.gov/spinalcordinjuries.html) the spinal cord. Other spinal cord problems include:




- Tumors
- Infections such as meningitis [\[https://medlineplus.gov/meningitis.html\]](https://medlineplus.gov/meningitis.html) and polio [\[https://medlineplus.gov/polioandpostpoliosyndrome.html\]](https://medlineplus.gov/polioandpostpoliosyndrome.html)
- Inflammatory diseases
- Autoimmune diseases
- Degenerative diseases such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis [\[https://medlineplus.gov/amyotrophiclateralsclerosis.html\]](https://medlineplus.gov/amyotrophiclateralsclerosis.html) and spinal muscular atrophy [\[https://medlineplus.gov/spinalmuscularatrophy.html\]](https://medlineplus.gov/spinalmuscularatrophy.html)

Symptoms vary but might include pain, numbness, loss of sensation and muscle weakness. These symptoms can occur around the spinal cord, and also in other areas such as your arms and legs. Treatments often include medicines and surgery.


Start Here

- Brain and Spinal Cord Tumors [\[https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/brain-and-spinal-cord-tumors\]](https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/brain-and-spinal-cord-tumors)
 (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Overview of Spinal Cord Disorders [\[https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/brain-spinal-cord-and-nerve-disorders/spinal-cord-disorders/overview-of-spinal-cord-disorders\]](https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/brain-spinal-cord-and-nerve-disorders/spinal-cord-disorders/overview-of-spinal-cord-disorders) (Merck & Co., Inc.)
Also in Spanish [\[https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/enfermedades-cerebrales-medulares-y-nerviosas/trastornos-de-la-m%C3%A9dula-espinal/introducci%C3%B3n-a-los-trastornos-de-la-m%C3%A9dula-espinal\]](https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/enfermedades-cerebrales-medulares-y-nerviosas/trastornos-de-la-m%C3%A9dula-espinal/introducci%C3%B3n-a-los-trastornos-de-la-m%C3%A9dula-espinal)

Diagnosis and Tests

- Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF) Analysis [\[https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/cerebrospinal-fluid-csf-analysis/\]](https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/cerebrospinal-fluid-csf-analysis/)
 (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [\[https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/analisis-del-liquido-cefalorraquideo/\]](https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/analisis-del-liquido-cefalorraquideo/)
- Lumbar and Cervical Discography [\[https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Treatments/Assessment-Tools/Discography\]](https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Treatments/Assessment-Tools/Discography)
(North American Spine Society)
- Myelography [\[https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/myelography/\]](https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/myelography/)  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [\[https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/mielografia/\]](https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/mielografia/)
- Neurological Exam [\[https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/neurological-exam/\]](https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/neurological-exam/)  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [\[https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/examen-neurologico/\]](https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/examen-neurologico/)
- Specialized Nerve Tests: EMG, NCV and SSEP [\[https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Treatments/Assessment-Tools/Specialized-Nerve-Tests\]](https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Treatments/Assessment-Tools/Specialized-Nerve-Tests) (North American Spine Society)
- Spine MRI [\[https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/spinemr\]](https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/spinemr) (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [\[https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/spinemr\]](https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/spinemr)

Treatments and Therapies

- Childhood Central Nervous System Germ Cell Tumors Treatment [<https://www.cancer.gov/types/brain/patient/child-cns-germ-cell-treatment-pdq>]  (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/cerebro/paciente/tratamiento-celulas-germinativas-snc-infantil-pdq#_152]

Related Issues

- Dressing with Ease, Style, and Comfort [<https://www.als.org/navigating-als/resources/fyi-dressing-ease-style-and-comfort>] (ALS Association)


Specifics

- Birth Disorders of the Brain and Spinal Cord [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/birth-disorders-brain-and-spinal-cord>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Brain and Spinal Cord Tumors in Adults [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/brain-spinal-cord-tumors-adults.html>] (American Cancer Society)
- Brown-Sequard Syndrome [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/brown-sequard-syndrome>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Central Pain Syndrome [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/central-pain-syndrome>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Spinal Cord Tumor [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/spinal-cord-tumor/symptoms-causes/syc-20350103?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/spinal-cord-tumor/symptoms-causes/syc-20350103?p=1>]
- Spinal Infections [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Conditions/Infections-Tumors/Spinal-Infections>] (North American Spine Society)
- Stiff-Person Syndrome [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/stiff-person-syndrome>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/es/health-information/disorders/el-sindrome-de-la-persona-rigida>]
- Tarlov Cysts [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/tarlov-cysts>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Tethered Spinal Cord Syndrome [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/tethered-spinal-cord-syndrome>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Transverse Myelitis [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/transverse-myelitis>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)


Genetics

- Caudal regression syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/caudal-regression-syndrome>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Statistics and Research

- Advances in Brain and Spinal Cord Tumor Research [<https://www.cancer.gov/types/brain/research>]  (National Cancer Institute)
- Key Statistics for Brain and Spinal Cord Tumors [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/brain-spinal-cord-tumors-adults/about/key-statistics.html>] (American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/tipos/tumores-de-encefalo-o-de-medula-espal/acerca/estadisticas-clave.html>]

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Spinal Cord Diseases [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Spinal+Cord+Diseases%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles


References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Postoperative improvement in the index finger center of pressure trajectory during... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40749016]
- Article: Efficacy of measuring lysophosphatidylcholine levels in human cerebrospinal fluid to differentiate... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40628853]
- Article: Effect of diabetes mellitus on spinal cord high signal relief after... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40611185]
- Spinal Cord Diseases -- see more articles [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Spinal+Cord+Diseases%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+]

Reference Desk

- Anatomy of the Spine [https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Resources/Anatomy-Spine] (North American Spine Society)
- Central Nervous System: The Brain and Spinal Cord [https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/central-nervous-system.html] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/central-nervous-system.html]
- Definitions [https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Resources/Definitions] (North American Spine Society)

Find an Expert

- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [https://www.ninds.nih.gov/] 

Children

- Risk Factors for Brain and Spinal Cord Tumors in Children [https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/brain-spinal-cord-tumors-children/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html] (American Cancer Society)

Patient Handouts

- Epidural abscess [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001416.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001416.htm]
- Spinal cord abscess [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001405.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001405.htm]
- Spinal tumor [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001403.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001403.htm]
- Subacute combined degeneration [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000723.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000723.htm]
- Tabes dorsalis [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000729.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000729.htm]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

CSF leak [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001068.htm>]

Epidural abscess [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001416.htm>]

Spinal cord abscess [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001405.htm>]

Spinal tumor [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001403.htm>]

Subacute combined degeneration [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000723.htm>]

Tabes dorsalis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000729.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/amyotrophiclateralsclerosis.html>]

Spina Bifida [<https://medlineplus.gov/spinabifida.html>]

Spinal Cord Injuries [<https://medlineplus.gov/spinalcordinjuries.html>]

Spinal Muscular Atrophy [<https://medlineplus.gov/spinalmuscularatrophy.html>]

Spinal Stenosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/spinalstenosis.html>]

Syringomyelia [<https://medlineplus.gov/syringomyelia.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Spinal Cord Diseases* is the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/>]

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