

# Sciatica

## What is Sciatica?

Sciatica is pain due to shock or damage to the major leg nerve, the sciatic nerve. This is located in the back and outer side of both legs. However, sciatica generally affects only one side of the body.

## Signs and Symptoms

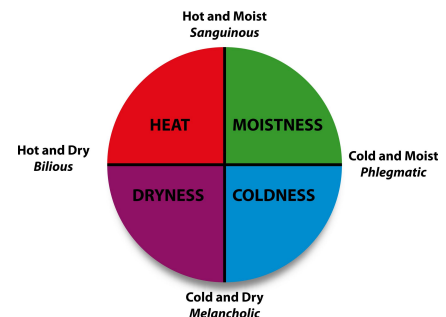
Pain radiating from the lower back, through the back of the thigh, and down through the leg. Depending on where the sciatic nerve is damaged, the pain may also radiate to the foot and even the toes. Other symptoms are: stiffness in the back, leg and foot; decreased sensation or numbness affecting the back of the calf or sole of the foot; tingling, burning or abnormal sensations; weakness of the knee or foot; difficulty in walking; inability to move the foot and bend the knee (in severe cases).

## Causes and Risk Factors

Sciatica may develop due to several causes: a slipped disc; local pressure due to a poorly administered intra-muscular injection; prolonged pressure on or entrapment of the nerve; direct trauma due to fracture of the pelvis and gunshot wounds. Risk factors include improper lifting of heavy objects; poor posture; exposure of the lower back to cold weather or low temperatures, and excessive intake of cold & dry foods.

## The Tibb View of Sciatica

According to Tibb, sciatica is associated with the qualities of **coldness with dryness**, which are aggravated by the exposure of the lower back to coldness. Overuse and improper bending and lifting techniques create excessive heat which eventually leads to dryness and then cold. Insufficient heat due to decreased blood supply to the lower back can result in chronic inflammation which causes nerve entrapment. All temperamental types can be affected.



## Management of Sciatica

Management is aimed at **reducing the excess coldness with dryness** associated with sciatica, by implementing Tibb Lifestyle Factors that will **increase the qualities of heat and moistness**. This assists Physis in addressing both the symptoms and causes of sciatica.

## **Tibb Lifestyle Factors**

### **Food and Drink**

- Eat **mostly Hot & Moist foods** - such as spinach, dates, mango, and tumeric, **followed by Hot & Dry foods** - like oily fish, green or red peppers, avocados and parsley.
- Eat **less of Cold & Moist foods** - such as milk, pineapples, and broccoli, and the **least amount of Cold & Dry foods** - like beef, tomatoes, sour milk, and beans.
- Eat mostly fruit and vegetables during an acute attack.
- Drink 2-3 litres of warm water daily.
- Limit the intake of tea, coffee, cauliflower, dried beans, lentils, fish, eggs and peas.
- Avoid all red meat for at least 15 days.
- Avoid all fried foods and roasted nuts.

### **Other Lifestyle Advice**

- Rest in order to take the weight off the affected area until the symptoms subside.
- Once the acute attack has subsided, practice stretching exercises like yoga as this may help relieve nerve compression.
- Two to three days after the onset of the acute attack, apply a hot pack to relieve pain in the affected area.
- Avoid lifting heavy objects. When the condition resolves, practice proper bending and lifting techniques. For example, before lifting, bend down at the knees, and keep the load as close to the body as possible.

### **Herbal Remedies**

- Add ¼ - ½ teaspoon of turmeric to 1 cup of hot milk. Add a pinch of black pepper and honey to taste. Drink twice daily.
- **Detox** - Add Epsom salts to bathwater to help remove toxins and soothe inflamed muscles.



## Hot & Dry Foods

Meats	Vegetables	Fruits	Nuts	Grains & Seeds	Dairy Products	Oils	Spices & Herbs	Drinks	Flavourants	Condiments & Spreads	Confectionary & Desserts	Cereals	Dishes		
all small bird meat	bitter melon	avocado	cashews	celery seeds	eggs	mustard oil	aniseed	alcohol	pungent and bitter flavourants	chilli sauce			spicy dishes		
	celery	grapes		hazelnuts			chickpeas	cinnamon		grape juice				mustard sauce	
	green pepper			pecan nuts			fenureek seeds	cloves, garlic		herbal teas				peri-peri sauce	
	leek			walnuts			gram flour	green/red chilli		(see herbs)					
	onion						mustard seeds	fenureek							
	red pepper						papad	lavender							
	yellow pepper							nutmeg							
										oregano					
										paprika					
					parsley										
				rocket, rosemary											
				saffron											
				tarragon											

## Hot & Moist Foods

Meats	Vegetables	Fruits	Nuts	Grains & Seeds	Dairy Products	Oils	Spices & Herbs	Drinks	Flavourants	Condiments & Spreads	Confectionary & Desserts	Cereals	Dishes	
buck	artichokes	bananas	almonds	bread	clarified butter	castor oil	bay leaves	green tea	honey	mayonnaise	biscuits	all bran flakes	sweet dishes	
goat	asparagus	dates	brazil nuts	bulgar wheat	condensed milk	olive oil	black pepper	hot water	molasses		cakes	bran		
goose	olives	guavas	pistachios	flour	cheese	sunflower oil	cayenne pepper	juices	salt		chocolate	honey smaks		
lamb	spinach	mangoes	apricot kernels	pasta	cream cheese		chives	(see fruits)	sugar		liquorice	muesli		
liver	spring onion	peaches		rye bread	mother's milk		ginger, fennel	herbal teas				vermicelli		nutri-k
mutton	sweet potato	papaya		sunflower seeds	(for babies)		green masala	(see herbs)						
turkey	turnips			wheat	fresh cream		marjoram							
				macaroni				mint, sage						
				dill seeds				soya sauce						
							thyme, turmeric							
					watercress									
					white pepper									