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Sciatica

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Definition

Definition

By Mayo Clinic staff

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Sciatica refers to pain that radiates along the path of the sciatic nerve and its branches — from your back down your buttock and leg. The sciatic nerve is the longest nerve in your body. It runs from your spinal cord to your buttock and hip area and down the back of each leg.



Sciatic nerve

Sciatica is a symptom, not a disorder. The radiating pain of sciatica signals another problem involving the nerve, such as a herniated disk. Depending on the cause, the pain of acute sciatica — which may be quite uncomfortable — usually goes away on its own within a couple of months.

In the meantime, self-care measures may help you ease sciatica. Sometimes, your doctor will suggest other treatment.

Symptoms

References

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