

BROSTROM PHYSICAL THERAPY

Monthly Newsletter

MARCH 2019

Diagnosis in Focus: Sciatica

From the desk of: Amy Waltz, PT (Clinical Director), MPT, CLT

- **What is sciatica?**

Sciatica refers to pain that radiates along the path of the sciatic nerve, which branches from the nerve roots* in the lower back through the hips and buttocks and down each leg. Typically, sciatica affects only one side of your body.

- **What causes sciatica?**

Sciatica is usually caused when a bone spur (overgrowth of bone), herniated disc*, or narrowing of the spine in the lower back pinches or irritates the sciatic nerve, resulting in radiating pain through the back of the leg(s). The following conditions and activities are common causes of sciatica:

- 1) Piriformis syndrome*;
- 2) Prolonged sitting;
- 3) Trauma (i.e. car accident);
- 4) Narrowing of the spinal column as a result of aging.

- **Symptoms of sciatica**

The symptoms of sciatica are typically constant throughout the day but can vary from being a mild ache to a sharp pain or burning sensation. Other common symptoms include (but are not limited to):

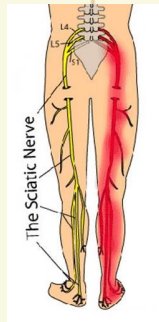
- 1) Pain in the back of the leg(s);
- 2) Numbness or tingling in the back of the leg(s);
- 3) Muscle weakness in the back of the leg(s).

- **Prognosis of sciatica**

Even when the pain associated with sciatica is severe or sharp in nature, most cases resolve with non-operative treatments in a few weeks. Sciatica is generally never completely resolved—it can return due to the causes listed above—but symptoms can be minimized with proper treatment and prevention exercises.

- **What can Physical Therapy do for sciatica?**

We're glad you asked! Physical therapy can provide a hands-on approach to relieving the symptoms of sciatica and educate you on how to prevent reoccurrence. Physical therapy can also provide exercises to strengthen your low back and leg muscles. Proper sitting/standing posture and body mechanics can minimize the potential of pinching a nerve, thus averting the cause of sciatica.



If you or a loved one are suffering from sciatic pain, we first recommend you discuss the symptoms with your physician. If physical therapy is recommended following your physician appointment, our team of therapists would be happy to establish a plan of care and provide treatment! We can provide a large array of pain-relieving methods and treatments to encourage long-term relief.

Glossary of Medical Terms

***Nerve root:** the initiation of peripheral nerves emerging from the spinal cord and extending to the extremities (legs, arms, etc.).

***Herniated disc:** A rupture of the disc between spinal vertebrae.

***Piriformis syndrome:** a condition where the sciatic nerve is compressed beneath the piriformis muscle (located in the buttock), causing symptoms similar to sciatica.

“To handle yourself, use your head. To handle others, use your heart.” -Eleanor Roosevelt

Guess Who

Our February 2019 newsletter listed some fun facts about each of our therapists. Did you match them correctly?

1. This therapist does not eat off of metal silverware/always uses plastic ware.



1. Carly



2. Amy

3. This therapist does not drink carbonated beverages.



4. Danielle

5. This therapist has a "special" go-to pen (and refuses to use any others).



6. Ann

2. This therapist only drinks warm or hot water (not room temperature or cold).



3. Katie

4. This therapist was adopted at the age of 5.



5. Sarah

6. This therapist LOVES the smell but hates the taste of coffee.

Post a comment with your reactions and results!

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY!

WHY CAN'T YOU BORROW MONEY FROM A LEPRECHAUN?

BECAUSE THEY'RE ALWAYS A LITTLE SHORT.



Recipe of the Month: Strawberry Spinach Salad

Ingredients (Salad):

- 10 ounces fresh spinach—rinsed, dried, and torn into bite-sized pieces
- 1 quart strawberries—cleaned, hulled, and sliced
- 1/4 cup almonds, blanched and slivered (optional)

Ingredients (Dressing):

- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon poppy seeds
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup distilled white vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon minced onion

Directions:

- In a medium bowl, whisk together the sesame seeds, poppy seeds, sugar, olive oil, vinegar, paprika, Worcestershire sauce, and onion. Cover and chill for one hour.
- In a large bowl, combine the spinach, strawberries, and almonds. Pour dressing over salad and toss. Refrigerate 10 to 15 minutes before serving.



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