



## Ask Dr. Michael The Pain Expert



Dr. Michael Clifford

### Sciatica Neuralgia

*I have a sharp pain that starts in my lower back and goes down my leg. What causes it and what can I do? Shannon B.*

The pain you are experiencing is called sciatic neuralgia. The sciatic nerve is the largest nerve in the body and begins from nerve roots in the lumbar spinal cord in the low back and extends through the buttocks, sending smaller nerve endings down the lower leg to the feet. Compression of this nerve causes irritation and inflammation that results in the characteristic pain that follows the nerve pathway, radiating from your lumbar spine, through your buttock and down the back of your leg. Compression of the sciatic nerve can result from degenerating discs and joints of the lumbar spine, bulging or herniated discs, tightness of the piriformis muscle, injury, medical conditions such as spondylolisthesis, scoliosis, and even pregnancy.

#### Symptoms of Sciatica Neuralgia

Sciatica causes pain, a burning sensation, numbness, or tingling, radiating from the lower back and upper buttock down the back of the thigh to the back of the leg, reaching sometimes below the knee and as far as the foot. Pain can be experienced in the lumbar spine, buttocks, hip, and leg, and result in muscle weakness. The pain of sciatica worsens over time, and may vary from a mild aching to excruciating pain, and may produce a sharp sensation like an electric jolt. While often associated with lower back pain, sciatica can be experienced even without back pain. Severe sciatica can make walking difficult, and the symptoms of sciatica can be aggravated by walking or bending at the waist.

#### Treatment for Sciatica Neuralgia

The goal of treatment is to relieve pain and prevent its recurrence, to restore pain free range of motion, and increase strength and stability of joints. Chiropractic manipulation has been shown in research to be the most effective treatment for back pain, by restoring joint function and relieving the nerve compression that causes sciatic neuralgia. In addition bulging discs may be relieved with spinal decompression. Hot and cold packs, ultrasound, TENS, trigger point therapy, myofascial release, stretching, and massage are all beneficial and help relieve pain. Exercise can help improve pain and functional levels. In rare cases anesthetic injections or surgery may be necessary. At Haven Advanced Pain Relief Centre we employ a comprehensive approach to treatment that has proven to be the most highly effective.

Dr. Michael Clifford is a U.S. Board Certified Chiropractic Physician, Physiotherapist and Chiropractic Sports Physician, and founder of *Haven Chiropractic Advanced Pain Relief and Family Wellness Care*. Galways Lane, Douglas, Cork. [havenchiropractic@aol.com](mailto:havenchiropractic@aol.com)  
[www.havenchiropractic.ie](http://www.havenchiropractic.ie).

Call today for a pain consultation. 021 485 7669