AN INTRODUCTION TO

RADICULOPATHY

This booklet provides general information on radiculopathy. It is not meant to replace any personal conversations that you might wish to have with your physician or other member of your healthcare team. Not all the information here will apply to your individual treatment or its outcome.
The human spine is made up of 24 bones or vertebrae in the cervical (neck) spine, the thoracic (chest) spine, and the lumbar (lower back) spine, plus the sacral bones.

These vertebrae are connected by several joints, which allow you to bend, twist, and carry loads. The main joint between two vertebrae is called an intervertebral disc. The disc is made up of two parts, a tough and fibrous outer layer (annulus fibrosis) and a soft, gelatinous center (nucleus pulposus). These two parts work in conjunction to allow the spine to move, and also provide shock absorption.
Each vertebra has an opening (vertebral foramen) through which a tubular bundle of spinal nerves and spinal nerve roots travel. Beginning at the base of the brain to the mid-lumbar spine, this bundle of nerves is called the spinal cord. The bundle is then referred to as the cauda equina through the bottom of the spine.
About Spinal Nerves
At each level of the spine, spinal nerves exit the spinal cord and cauda equina to both the left and right sides then extend throughout the body. Signals travel along these nerves to and from the brain to enable movement and feeling.

CERVICAL NERVES allow for motion and sensation in portions of the upper body including the head, neck, shoulders, arms, and hands.
Two types of signals are:

- Sensory signals that travel from the body to the brain providing information on sensations such as touch, pressure, pain, and temperature.
- Motor signals that travel from the brain to the body to direct movement.

**THORACIC NERVES**
allow for motion and sensation in the lower body including the shoulders, chest, abdomen, arms, hands, and upper and middle back.

**LUMBAR NERVES**
allow for motion and sensation in the lower body including the lower back, pelvis, buttocks, groin, legs, and feet.
What is Radiculopathy?
Radiculopathy is a symptom of an underlying spinal condition that compresses or irritates spinal nerves. It can present as pain, numbness, tingling, or weakness along the path of a nerve.

For example, if a spinal nerve in the lumbar region is irritated, radiating pain may be experienced along the associated nerve route that begins in the lower back and travels through the leg.

What Causes Radiculopathy?
Radiculopathy is most commonly the result of a condition affecting an intervertebral disc, such as a bulging or herniated disc that presses against the spinal nerves. Other causes may include:

- Degenerative disc disease (DDD)
- Spinal stenosis
- Bone spurs
- Tumor
- Trauma
- Diabetes

If you feel that you are experiencing pain radiating from your back to your limbs, you should consult a physician for an accurate diagnosis.

Learn more about radiculopathy, DDD, herniated discs, and spinal stenosis
Visit www.nuvasive.com/conditions
If you have any questions about radiculopathy or back pain in general, please call or see your physician, who is the only one qualified to diagnose and treat your spinal condition. This patient information brochure is not a replacement for professional medical advice.

RESOURCES

For more information about radiculopathy please visit:

www.nuvasive.com/conditions

If you would like to learn more about patient support and education for chronic back and leg pain sufferers and their loved ones, please visit:

www.thebetterwayback.org