



PARAPLEGIA

NEWLY DIAGNOSED PATIENT:

WHAT TO EXPECT



Paraplegia

is a medical condition in which one experiences the loss of movement and/or loss of feeling in the body. Occurring after an injury to the nervous system. Paraplegia involves partial or complete paralysis of the legs and/or trunk.

Online and Community / Information and Support

SPINALpedia serves the needs of thousands of individuals and families affected by a spinal cord injury (SCI) from all over the world. We are here to empower our community through our shared SCI knowledge, voices and stories. Our motto is "See it, Believe it, Do it-- The Power of Experience!"

CONTACT WITH US:



+860 1234567
24/7 FREE CONCULTANCY

2538 COPPERHEAD ROAD
CT 12038658, COPPERHEAD ROAD
NEW HAVEN CT, 06511



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A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING PARAPLEGIA AND WHAT TO DO IF YOU NEED HELP

✓ Questions?

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor or nurse call line if you have any problems.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 811.

✓ When to call your Primary Care Provider or seek emergency room attention!

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor or nurse call line if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take. For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 811.

- You need help with urination and bowel movements.
- You have pressure sores.
- Pus draining from an incision.
- Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care.
- Sweating above the level of the spinal injury.
- Cold, clammy skin above the level of the spinal injury.

✓ Knowledge of Risk Factors and Warning Signs of Paraplegia

+ Risk Factors

Although a spinal cord injury is often caused by an unexpected accident that can happen to anyone at any age.

- Men are more likely than women to sustain a spinal cord injury.
- Motor vehicle accidents are the leading SCI causes for young adults.
- Spinal cord injuries suffered by people over 65 years-old are most oftentimes caused by a fall.
- Sport-related injuries account for 8 percent of SCI each year.

+ Signs and Symptoms of Paraplegia

Symptoms depend on the extent of the involvement of the spinal cord.

- Patient experiences loss of movement or muscle control in the legs, feet, toes, or torso.
- Patient experiences loss of sensation in the legs, feet, toes or torso.
- Tingling in the legs, feet, toes or trunk can also be felt.
- Bladder and bowel incontinence.

✓ Physiological Processes/Pathways

Some of the most common effects of paraplegia include:

- Secondary infections in the lower half of the body, particularly bedsores and skin problems.
- Loss of mobility below the waist.
- Loss of sensation below the site of the injury.
- Changes in mood; depression is common among people with a new paraplegia diagnosis.
- Chronic pain.



Safety equipment issued to sports players is an important factor in preventing injuries.



Never push anyone into a swimming pool. This could lead to a serious injury.

Prevention strategies & measures

- Never move someone who has a suspected spinal cord injury.
- Let emergency professionals evaluate the injured person. • Moving someone with a spinal cord injury could further damage the spinal cord.
- Keep a clean home. Slips and falls happen frequently in the home.
- Avoid distractions while driving and pay close attention to the road.
- Always wear a seatbelt when driving or riding in a motor vehicle.

Sports Safety

- Always wear a helmet and all suggested safety equipment.
- Learn all of the rules of contact sports.

Playground Safety

- Supervise small children at all times.
- Inspect playground equipment.
- Trampolines are fun but can lead to serious injury.

Preventing spinal cord injuries is sometimes impossible, however, there are some general safety practices, which may make them less likely. We do not need to live in constant fear of injury to prevent spinal cord injuries, rather just be aware of what may cause them. You just may end up saving a life.

✓ Health & Medicine News

+ Anatomy

- The body is prevented from sending signals back up the spinal cord to the brain.
- Signals cannot travel to and from the lower regions of the body.

+ Current and potential treatments

- Surgery, Medication, Physical Therapy
- Exercise Therapy, Education, Occupational Training and Therapy, Psychotherapy
- Alternative modalities: ONLY USE THESE WITH THE CONSENT OF YOUR DOCTOR.