

# Focus On: Sciatica

Sciatica describes pain, weakness, tingling, or numbness that you may feel in your back, your buttock, your leg, or your foot.

The sciatic nerve is the largest nerve in the body.

It is formed by the nerve roots coming out of the spinal cord into the lower back.

The nerve runs down through the buttock, and then its branches extend down the back of the leg to the ankle and foot.

Sciatica can happen when there is pressure or irritation on a part of the nerve or its nerve roots.

This may be caused by a herniated disc, when all or part of a spinal disc pushes through a weakened part of the spine.

Sciatica usually improves and goes away with time.

At first, your doctor may suggest treatment options including exercises, over-the-counter pain medicines, and using heat or cold for pain relief. They may also advise physical therapy.

To learn more about sciatica, talk to your doctor.