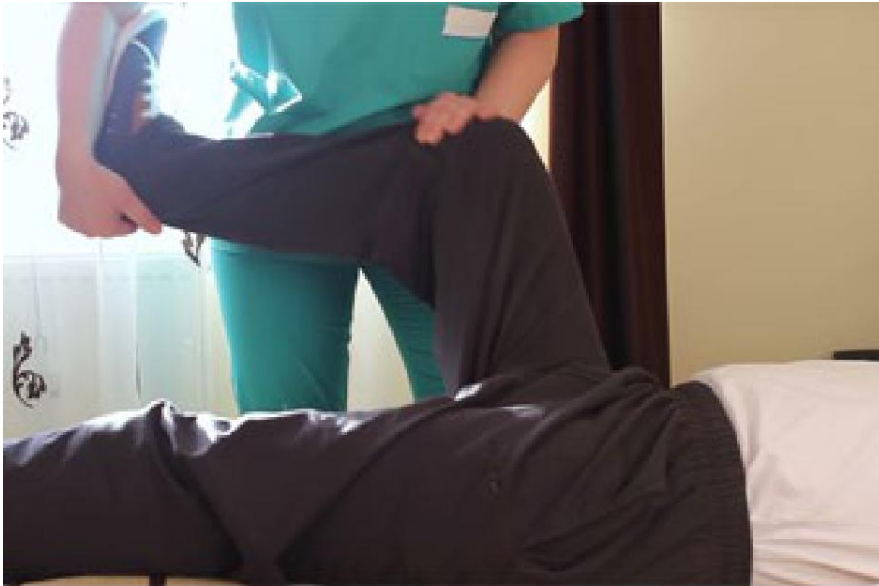




Paraplegia



Overview

This is paralysis of the lower part of your body. It's a loss of feeling and control that happens when nerve signals can't travel up and down the nerves of your spine. This paralysis affects your legs, and it can affect some or all of your trunk and your pelvic organs.

Causes

Paraplegia happens when you injure your spinal cord (or the nerves at the base of your spine). It's often from traumatic incidents like road accidents or falls. These nerves can also be injured by diseases and spinal conditions such as cancer, arthritis and inflammation.

Symptoms

With paraplegia, you lose feeling and movement. You may not be able to move your legs at all. You may lose control of your bladder and bowels. You may have changes in your sexual function and fertility. It may be hard for you to breathe and to cough. You may also have painful, stinging sensations caused by your nerve damage. And you may have spasms which can cause pain in the affected area. Your symptoms depend on how badly your nerves were injured. With a severe injury, the loss of feeling and movement may be complete. If your injury is less severe, you may still have some feeling and some control.

Treatment

There is no cure for this type of paralysis. Your treatment will involve ongoing care and rehabilitation. You'll learn new skills and new ways to do things so you can be as independent as possible. And, medications can help you manage or improve some of your symptoms. Your doctor will create a care plan that's right for you.