



ARACHNOIDITIS-NO LONGER RARE

The initiating cause of arachnoiditis may initially involve damage to nerve roots in the lumbar cauda equina or the arachnoid lining of the spinal canal. Arachnoiditis is simply inflammation of the lining, and adhesive arachnoiditis occurs when nerve roots of the cauda equina adhere to the lining by adhesions.

EXPLANATION

Damage to the nerve roots can be caused by:

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| 1. FRICTION | 4. TRAUMA |
| 2. COMPRESSION | 5. INFECTIONS |
| 3. TOXINS | |

The nerve roots of the cauda equina are naturally suspended and float freely in spinal fluid which lubricates them just as oil does in your car's engine to prevent friction and corrosion. Spinal fluid also provides nourishment to the nerve roots and washes away toxins and biologic waste products of metabolism and inflammation. If nerve roots are forced to rub together or are compressed very long, inflammation will occur which may eventually form adhesions and cause attachment of the nerve roots to the arachnoid lining. When this occurs "adhesive arachnoiditis" is the result.

KEY FACTS TO KNOW

Chronic spinal conditions such as herniated or bulging discs, spinal canal narrowing (stenosis), malformations such as kyphoscoliosis, cysts (Tarlov or tumors), and degenerative arthritis may all produce friction or compression of the spinal nerve roots. Toxins including viruses, bacteria, dyes, and medicinal agents may enter the spinal canal and cause inflammation in nerve roots and/or the arachnoid lining.

AGING POPULATION

Unfortunately, necessary medical procedures including surgery, epidural anesthesia, or spinal taps can inadvertently cause friction, compression, or the entry of toxins into the spinal canal. The population is aging and older persons commonly develop a spinal condition which can lead to arachnoiditis.

TAKE AWAY FACT

If you have a common, chronic, spinal condition such as ruptured discs or scoliosis, and you live long enough, you may likely develop arachnoiditis.