

MERALGIA PARESTHETICA

What is meralgia paresthetica?

Meralgia paresthetica is an irritation of one of the nerves that goes to your upper, outer thigh.

How does it occur?

The nerve that allows you to feel your upper outer thigh starts in your low back. As this nerve leaves the lower abdomen on its way to the thigh it can become trapped. No one really knows exactly why this happens. In some cases, a low back injury may cause a disk to push on the nerve. Some other causes may include:

- being very overweight
- diabetes
- wearing tight belts or pants

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms can include burning, tingling, numbness, or pain in the upper, outer thigh. The skin may be very sensitive if anything touches it.

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will review your symptoms and examine your back, abdomen and thigh. An X-ray, CT scan or MRI may be done of your back, pelvis, or hip to see where the nerve is getting trapped. Many times these tests are normal. Your provider may also order a test to see how well the nerves are working, called a nerve conduction test.

How is it treated?

In many cases the symptoms go away without treatment. Treatments may include:

- Wear looser clothing.
- Lose weight if needed.
- Your provider may recommend a cortisone-like injection in the nerve.
- In some cases surgery may be done to release the trapped nerve.
- If the problem is due to a disk problem in your back, your provider may recommend treatment for your disk.

How long will the effects last?

The symptoms may last for weeks to months.

When can I return to my sport or activity?

You may continue your sport unless you are too uncomfortable to participate. If your athletic clothing or body positions make your symptoms worse, you may need to try to change them.

What can I do to help prevent meralgia paresthetica?

Wear looser clothing and belts and maintain a healthy weight.

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