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# Arachnoiditis

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

## Source

*National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). [Arachnoiditis Information Page](#).*

Arachnoiditis is caused by the inflammation of the arachnoid, one of the membranes that surround and protect the nerves of the spinal cord. The arachnoid can become inflamed because of an irritation from chemicals, infection from bacteria or viruses, as the result of direct injury to the spine, chronic compression of spinal nerves, or complications from spinal surgery or other invasive spinal procedures. Inflammation can sometimes lead to the formation of scar tissue and adhesions, which cause the spinal nerves to “stick” together. If arachnoiditis begins to interfere with the function of one or more of these nerves, it can cause a number of symptoms, including chronic and persistent pain, numbness, tingling, and a characteristic stinging and burning pain in the lower back or legs. Some people with arachnoiditis will have debilitating muscle cramps, twitches, or spasms. It may also affect bladder, bowel, and sexual function. In severe cases, arachnoiditis may cause paralysis of the lower limbs.