



COMMON PERONEAL NERVE SYNDROME

The common peroneal nerve is one of the three major nerves that supplies the muscle and feeling of the lower leg. This nerve is formed in the lower lumbar spine and is part of the sciatic nerve. The nerve exits the pelvis and runs down the back of the thigh. Around the level of the knee are the sciatic nerve divides and one of these branches is the common peroneal nerve. The nerve then wraps around the fibula which is the bone which is located on the outside of the knee joint and lower leg. It then passes into the front part of the lower leg. It is within this part of the leg that the nerve supplies the muscles that control the foot and toes. The nerve also gives branches to areas of skin over the lower leg and foot.

CAUSE

The nerve can be compressed in its course around the outer part of the knee. This may be due to:

- Thickening of the ligament over the nerve
- Thickening of the muscle that the nerve pierces
- Trauma to the area that the nerve supplies, e.g. elbow fracture or large bruise

There may be no cause found.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The symptoms that can occur with this condition are:

- Numbness - in the skin of the lower leg and foot.
- Tingling – similar to pins and needles, this occurs in the same region as the numbness and,
- Weakness of the lower leg muscles causing a foot drop which can cause the foot to trip on the ground or uneven surfaces.

INVESTIGATIONS

The most common test performed is a:

- Nerve conduction study - which looks at the degree of compression on the nerve and whether there has been any changes within the nerve due to the compression.

Occasionally an:

- MRI or further images of the spine may be performed to rule out any causes higher up compressing the nerve.

St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne

St Vincent's Private Hospital Fitzroy
Phone: (03) 9411 7111

Website: www.svphm.org.au

St Vincent's Private Hospital East Melbourne
Phone: (03) 9928 6555

Website: www.svphm.org.au

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne

St Vincent's Hospital Fitzroy
Telephone: (03) 9231 2211

Website: www.svhm.org.au

Neurosurgery

Dr. Kristian Bulluss
Phone: (03) 9416 4619

Dr. Peter McNeill
Phone: (03) 9928 6333

Dr. Paul Smith
Phone: (03) 9639 3889

Dr. Carlos Chung
Phone: (03) 9419 5597

Assoc. Prof. Michael Murphy
Phone: (03) 9416 4619

Dr. Christopher Thien
Phone: (03) 9421 0355

Dr. Tiew Han
Phone: (03) 03 9417

Dr. Brendan O'Brien
Phone: (03) 9417 5033

Dr. Yi Yuen (Ian) Wang
Phone: (03) 9939 7112

Neurology

Prof. Mark Cook
Phone: (03) 9288 3068