

Sciatica After a Car Accident

Here's how a lawyer can protect your legal rights and help you recover financial compensation.

Car accidents happen daily in the Houston area – on highways such as I-45, I-10, and I-610; Washington Avenue, Broadway Street, and Kirby Drive; and on side streets and parking lots. The crash is over in seconds, but the lives of victims can be affected for months or even years after the accident.

A crash can cause many different types of injuries that have a wide range of symptoms. That's why it's important to get a proper diagnosis and seek immediate medical attention following a crash. For example, one car accident injury that many people aren't familiar with is sciatica. But it is a very painful injury that limits mobility and can impact your life physically, emotionally, and financially.

What is sciatica?

The longest and thickest nerve in the body is the sciatic nerve. It runs from the lower back, through the hips and buttocks, and down each leg to just below the knee. The functions of the sciatic nerve are to help muscles in the legs and feet move and also help you feel sensations in your legs.

Sciatica is damage anywhere along the nerve – such as irritation, inflammation, pinching, or compression – that results in pain.

How can a car accident cause sciatica?

Back injuries are common in car accidents, including herniated discs (ruptured discs or slipped discs). Discs are rubbery pads with a gel-like center between vertebrae (the spinal column bones) and act as shock absorbers as the body moves and bends. A herniated disc is when the disc is damaged, and the center pushes out through the exterior. This can lead to pressure on the sciatic nerve.

Pressure on the nerve can also occur from a fragment of a broken vertebra or swelling and inflammation from lower back or leg injuries. An accident can also aggravate a preexisting back condition – such as spinal stenosis, arthritis, or disc problems – that leads to sciatica.

What are the symptoms of sciatica?

Symptoms can include moderate to severe pain in the lower back, buttocks, or down one leg. Other symptoms may include numbness or weakness in those same areas. Pain may get worse by moving. There may also be a "pins and needles" sensation in the legs, feet, or toes. In addition, some people experience burning or tingling that worsens when sitting.

The pain of sciatica is sometimes described as sharp, stabbing, shooting, or burning. Symptoms may be felt immediately following an accident or delayed, depending on the type and severity of the injury.

How is sciatica diagnosed and treated?

A doctor will conduct a physical exam to check your reflexes and muscle strength. In addition to the exam, the doctor may order imaging tests such as an X-ray, MRI, or CT scan. You may also need electromyography (EMG), a test that measures electrical impulses from the nerves and muscle response.

Treatment may involve medication that can control pain, such as anti-inflammatories, corticosteroids, antidepressants, anti-seizure medications, or opioids. In addition, physical therapy can help you correct posture, strengthen core muscles, and improve your range of motion. In some cases, surgery may be needed to remove part of a herniated disc or a bone spur or fragment causing pressure.

Can I recover financial compensation for sciatica after a car accident?

You can file a claim for compensation if a negligent driver caused the crash that left you with sciatica. For example, the at-fault driver may have been speeding, texting behind the wheel, recklessly changing lanes, extremely tired, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

But recovering compensation is a complicated process. Negligent drivers typically deny doing anything wrong and may even blame you for what happened. Insurance companies are financially motivated to keep payments low and will try to limit your compensation. They may question the seriousness of your injury or argue that your sciatica was caused by a preexisting back injury.

How much is a sciatica case worth?

The amount of recovery for a sciatica case can vary greatly and depends on many factors. These include the severity of the injury, the circumstances of the case, and insurance policy limits. Generally, you can seek compensation for damages that include:

- All current and future medical expenses related to your injury – including surgery, hospitalization, medication, physical therapy, and follow-up medical appointments.
- Lost wages if you were unable to work because of your sciatica injury.
- Replacement services if your injury left you unable to perform everyday tasks, such as yard work or house cleaning.
- Other damages, such as pain and suffering.

An attorney can determine the total damages you have suffered and give you an idea of how much compensation you can reasonably expect to recover.

How a car accident attorney can help with a sciatica claim

Insurance companies often treat claims involving sciatica after a car accident with skepticism and will try to pay you as little as possible. They handle claims daily and have the advantage – their adjusters and attorneys are skilled at finding ways to justify paying you less. An experienced attorney can:

- Investigate your accident.
- Gather evidence that proves negligence, such as video from traffic cameras.
- Interview witnesses.
- Consult experts as needed.
- Determine the total damages related to your sciatica injury.
- Build a strong case for financial compensation.
- Handle all communications with the insurance company on your behalf.
- Negotiate a settlement that meets your needs.
- Fight for you in court, if necessary.

If you have sciatica from a car accident that wasn't your fault, it's important to get legal advice as soon as possible. In Texas, the statute of limitations for taking legal action is two years from the date of your accident. That may sound like plenty of time, but it is in your best interests to take quick action. Evidence can be lost or destroyed if you wait too long, and witnesses may forget details that can help your case.

An experienced Houston car accident attorney can review the details of your accident and injury and discuss your potential legal options for recovering financial compensation. You can also get answers to your questions. [Contact Smith & Hassler](#) to schedule a free consultation.