



Glossary

Acute stage: The time immediately after your injury when you are in the hospital and may be treated for many different types of medical problems.

ADL: Activities of daily living: dressing, eating, getting in and out of bed, etc.

Advocate: Someone who represents you and who speaks out with your best interest in mind.

Ambulation: Walking with braces and crutches.

Cervical: Refers to the part of the spine in the neck region.

Coccyx: The bottom tip of the spine; the tailbone.

Conus medularis: The point of transition between the spinal cord proper and the cauda equina

Cystogram: An X-ray taken after injecting dye into the bladder.

Cystometric examination: An examination that measures and compares the forces that empty the bladder with those that prevent emptying of the bladder. These measurements are used to determine when and if a catheter can be removed.

Cystoscopy: Examination of the interior of the bladder with a special instrument.

Edema: Swelling, usually caused by the buildup of fluid in a particular area.

EMG: Electromyogram, a test using electronic devices that determines how well nerves and muscles are working.

Fecal impaction: Blockage of the bowels; may result in severe constipation.

Flat plate: X-ray taken of the abdomen.

Gait: A description of an individual's style of walking.

Hydronephrosis: Stretched kidney resulting from excessive reflux.

Incontinence: A bowel or bladder accident.

Intervertebral disk: Tough "cushions" made of a gristle-type material that separate the vertebrae in the spine.

Intravenous pyelogram (IVP): X-ray taken after injecting a dye into the vein that outlines the urinary system.

Laminectomy: An operation sometimes used to relieve pressure on the spinal cord. Also used to examine the extent of damage to the cord in special cases.

Lumbar: Refers to the area of the spine at the mid to lower back.

Myelogram: A test in which an opaque liquid is injected into the spinal canal that produces an outline of it on X-rays or fluoroscope.

Neurectomy: An operation in which the nerves to particular muscles are cut to eliminate severe spasticity in them.

Occupational therapist (OT): A professional who helps patients improve their range of motion, strength, and coordination of small movements of muscles and joints





in order to help them perform activities of daily living or return to work.

Orthosis: A device applied to the exterior of the body to support, aid, and align the body and limbs, or to influence motion by assisting, resisting, blocking, or unloading part of the body weight.

Paralysis: The inability to control movement of a part of the body.

Paraplegia: A condition involving complete paralysis of the legs.

Paresis: Incomplete paralysis or weakness of a part of the body.

Physiatrist: A doctor whose specialty is physical medicine and rehabilitation.

Physical therapist (PT): A professional who helps patients improve their strength, coordination, and range of motion of large movements of their muscles and joints.

Pressure sore: Also known as a pressure ulcer, decubitus ulcer, or bed sore; a reddened area or an open sore usually found on the skin over bony areas such as the hipbone or tailbone. It is usually caused by too much pressure on those areas.

Prone: Lying flat on the stomach.

Prosthesis: An artificial substitute for a missing body part.

Quadriplegia: Also called tetraplegia; a condition involving complete paralysis of the legs and partial or complete paralysis of the arms.

Range of motion: An arc of movement of a joint of the body.

Reflux: The back-flow of urine from the bladder into the ureters and kidneys.

Rehabilitation: The process of recovering from, adapting to, or compensating for disabilities.

Residual: Usually refers to the amount of urine left in the bladder after voiding without a catheter.

Rhizotomy: An operation to disconnect specific nerve roots in order to stop severe spasticity.

Sacral: Refers to the part of the spine in the hip area.

SCI: Spinal cord injury, an injury to back or neck causing damage to the spinal cord, leading to paralysis.

Sensation: Physical feelings like touch, pain, temperature, pressure, or awareness of where a body part is in space.

Spasm: A sudden, often uncontrolled, contraction of a muscle; a muscle jerk.

Spasticity: Movement in arms and legs due to muscle spasms that may occur as a result of spinal cord injury.

Spinal tap: A minor operation involving the insertion of a needle between two vertebrae to check the pressure of the spinal fluid.

Suprapubic cystostomy: A small opening made in the bladder in order to remove stones or establish suprapubic catheter urinary drainage.

Thoracic: Refers to the part of the spine at the upper-back to midback level.

Ventilator: A piece of equipment that helps a person to breathe who cannot do it independently.

Vertebrae: The bones that make up the spine.

