Coccydynia

Overview

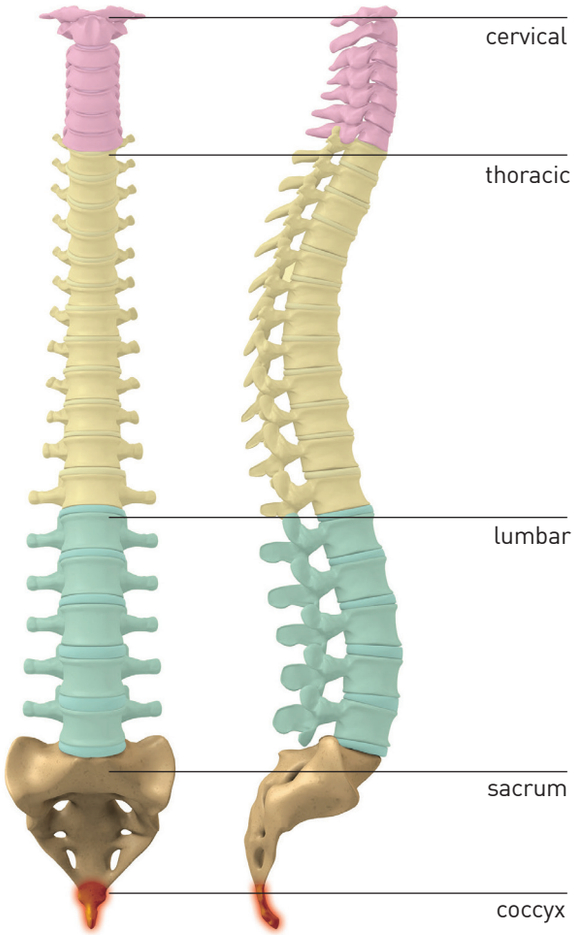
Coccydynia is pain in or around the area of the coccyx, also called the tailbone.

Causes & Symptoms

Most often, the cause of *coccydynia* is unknown (*"idiopathic"*). Other causes include trauma (for example, from falls and childbirth); abnormal, excessive mobility of the tailbone; and – very rarely – infection, tumor or fracture.

The classic symptom is pain when pressure is applied to the tailbone, such as when sitting on a hard chair. Symptoms usually improve with relief of pressure when standing or walking. Other symptoms include:

- Immediate and severe pain when moving from sitting to standing
- Pain during bowel movements
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Deep ache or resonant pain in the region of the tailbone



Diagnosis

A careful evaluation of your medical history and physical examination, along with possible lateral X-ray films may be used to aid in the diagnosis of Coccydynia. Your Spine Center provider may also order other more sophisticated scans in order to assess bone structure and other indicators.

Treatment

Treatment most often is conservative and consists of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen and naproxen to reduce inflammation, and the use of a therapeutic sitting cushion to take the pressure off of the tailbone when sitting. It might take many weeks or months of conservative treatment before significant pain relief is felt.

Your healthcare provider might consider physical therapy to treat coccydynia. This might include exercises to stretch and strengthen the supporting muscles. Modalities such as heat, massage, ultrasound and taping might also be used.

Coccygeal mobilization (internal or external) is used to move the coccyx back into its proper position and alleviate pain.

Surgical treatment procedures are considered only in very rare instances or severe cases where extensive conservative management does not control the related pain.

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