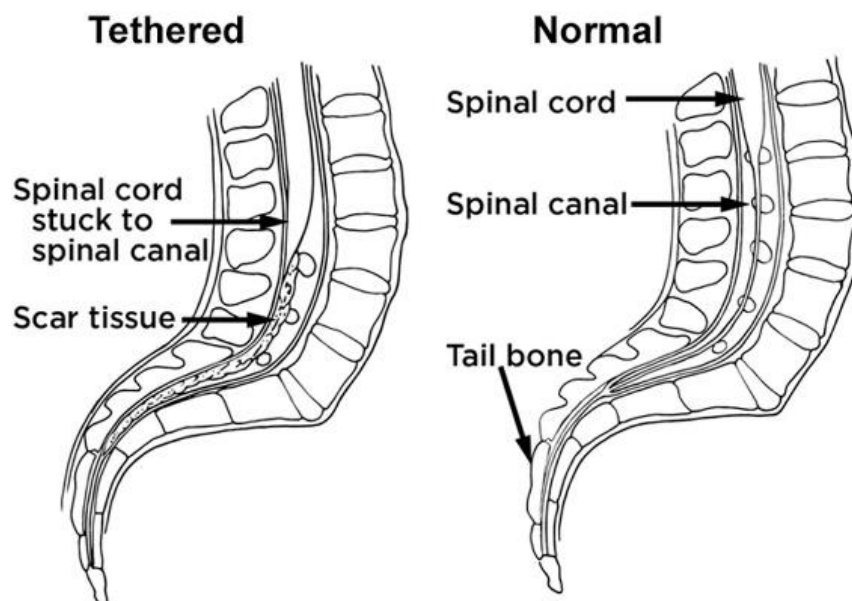


# Tethered spinal cord

## What is a tethered spinal cord?

A tethered spinal cord occurs when a person's spinal cord is attached to tissue around the sides or base of the spinal canal, limiting the spinal cord from moving freely.

Sometimes, due to growth, the increased tension on the spinal cord can injure the cord tissue causing symptoms to develop.



## Symptoms

*Tethered cord syndrome* is the term used when symptoms develop, including:

- Persistent or worsening pain in back or legs.
- Change in muscle strength in the legs, e.g. difficulty walking, tripping, and/or dragging feet.
- Abnormal sensations, e.g. pins and needles or numbness in legs.
- Change in bladder or bowel function, e.g. wetting or soiling accidents.
- Development of a scoliosis (spinal curvature).

## Diagnosis

Following a clinical review with your doctor an MRI of the spine may be required. Other tests may also be requested to investigate bladder and bowel function.



## Treatment

The usual treatment for *tethered cord syndrome* is surgery to release the spinal cord. This is referred to as 'detethering' the spinal cord. Your child will see a neurosurgeon to discuss this.

Members of the spinal rehabilitation team may also provide support for the symptoms, e.g. medications to relieve pain and continence support.

Following surgery, your child may require further rehabilitation to regain function e.g. physiotherapy and occupational therapy. All children will be followed up and monitored within the Spinal Rehabilitation Clinic.



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