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## MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY

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This list of terminology has been put together for your use and reference by the law firm of **DeCaro, Doran, Siciliano, Gallagher & DeBlasis, LLP**.

The terms listed are ones we see documented and referenced frequently in medical reports received in our office. The reference guide was generated as a means of providing information and assistance with the meaning of many of the terms used by the physicians in our area.

We hope you find this reference guide both useful and helpful in your daily endeavors.

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## MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY

- ▼ **Abduction** - The movement of a limb away from the midline of the body. Abduction of both legs spreads the legs. The opposite of abduction is adduction.
- **Acromioclavicular (AC) Joint** - Acromioclavicular joint is located between the acromion (a projection of the scapula that forms the point of the shoulder) and the clavicle (the collar bone).
- ▼ **Adduction** - The movement of a limb toward the midline of the body. The opposite of adduction is abduction. An adductor muscle pulls toward the midline of the body. For example, the adductor muscles of the legs pull the legs toward the midline of the body so the legs are closer together.
- ★ **Ankylosing Spondylitis** - A form of chronic inflammation of the spine and the sacroiliac joints. The sacroiliac joints are located in the low back where the sacrum (the bone directly above the tailbone) meets the iliac bones (bones on either side of the upper buttocks). Chronic inflammation in these areas causes pain and stiffness in and around the spine. Over time, chronic spinal inflammation (spondylitis) can lead to a complete cementing together (fusion) of the vertebrae, a process referred to as ankylosis. Ankylosis leads to loss of mobility of the spine.

**Anterior** - The front as opposed to the back (posterior).

- **Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL)** - A ligament in the knee that crosses from the underside of the femur (the thigh bone) to the top of the tibia (the bigger bone in the lower leg). Injuries to the ACL can occur in a number of situations and can be quite serious and often require surgery.
- **Anterior Drawer Sign** - In a knee examination, the forward or backward sliding of the tibia under applied stress, which indicates laxity or a tear of the anterior (forward slide) or posterior (backward slide) cruciate ligament of the knee.

**Arthropathy** - Any disease affecting a joint.

**Arthroscopic** - Surgery performed on joints using a fiberoptic system that allows visualization of the joint and surrounding structures for the purpose of diagnosis and treatment.

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- ★ **Babinski Sign** - An important neurologic examination based upon what the big toe does when the sole of the foot is stimulated. If the big toe goes up, that may mean trouble. Extension of the great toe and abduction of the other toes instead of the normal flexion reflex to plantar stimulation, may be indicative of spinal cord involvement (positive Babinski).
- **Baker Cyst** - A collection of synovial fluid that has escaped from the knee joint or a bursa and formed a new synovial fluid-lined sac (cyst) in the popliteal space (back of the knee). Seen in degenerative or other joint diseases that produce increased amounts of synovial fluid. A Baker cyst is sometimes called a **popliteal cyst** or **synovial cyst**. When an excess of knee joint fluid is compressed between the bones of the knee joint due to body weight, it can become trapped and separate from the joint to form the fluid-filled sac of a Baker cyst.

**Bell's Palsy** - Paralysis of the facial nerve, the nerve that supplies the facial muscles on one side of the face. Bell's palsy is also called facial nerve paralysis. The cause of facial nerve paralysis is often not known, but is thought to be due to a virus. The facial nerve is the 7th cranial nerve.

**bid** - Twice Daily

**Bradycardia** - A slow heart rate, usually defined as less than 60 beats per minute.

- ★ **Bulging Disc** - A condition related to the spine, usually the lumbar or low back, that occurs when a disc bulges through a crevice in the spine (similar to the way an old tire might bulge out). Discs are the soft, gelatinous material that cushions the vertebrae of the spine. A bulging disc occurs when the disc shifts out of its normal space and most often occurs simply as a result of age. A bulging disc is different from a herniated disc in that a bulging disc typically occurs gradually over time rather than suddenly. In the majority of patients who experience a bulging disc, there is no pain unless the disc becomes herniated or protrudes into a nerve.

**Bursa** - A closed sac lined with synovial membrane and containing synovial fluid, usually found or formed in areas subject to friction (over an exposed or prominent body part or where a tendon passes over a bone).

**Bursitis** - Inflammation of a bursa.

**c** - With

- ▼ **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS)** - The wrist is surrounded by a band of fibrous tissue that normally functions as a support for the joint. The tight space between this fibrous band and the wrist bone is called the carpal tunnel. The median nerve passes through the carpal tunnel to receive sensations from the thumb, index, and middle fingers of the hand. Any condition that causes swelling or a change in position of the tissue within the carpal tunnel can squeeze and irritate the median nerve. Irritation of the median nerve in this manner causes tingling and numbness of the thumb, index, and the middle fingers.
  
- ★ **Cauda Equina Syndrome** - Impairment of the nerves in the cauda equina, the bundle of spinal nerve roots that arise from the lower end of the spinal cord. The syndrome is characterized by dull pain in the lower back and upper buttocks and lack of feeling (analgesia) in the buttocks, genitalia and thigh, together with disturbances of bowel and bladder function.

**Chondromalacia** - Abnormal softening or degeneration of cartilage.

- **Chondromalacia Patellae** - Abnormal softening of the cartilage under the kneecap (patella). It is the most common cause of chronic knee pain. It results from degeneration of cartilage due to poor alignment of the kneecap as it slides over the lower end of the thigh bone (femur). Sometimes referred to as **patellofemoral syndrome**.

**Closed Fracture** - A fracture in which skin is intact at site of fracture. Also known as a **simple fracture**.

**Closed Reduction** - Reduction by manipulation of bone, without incision in the skin.

**C/O** - Complaint of . . . Checked out

- **Collateral Knee Ligament (lateral)** - The knee joint is surrounded by a joint capsule with ligaments strapping the inside and outside of the joint (collateral ligaments), as well as crossing within the joint (cruciate ligaments). These ligaments provide stability and strength to the knee joint. The lateral collateral ligament of the knee is on the outside of the joint.
  
- **Collateral Knee Ligament (medial)** - The medial collateral ligament of the knee is on the inner side of the joint.

**Comminuted Fracture** - A fracture in which the bone is broken into more than two fragments.

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**Compound Fracture** - A fracture in which the skin is lacerated and there is an open wound down to the site of the fracture.

**Compression Fracture** - A fracture caused by compression, the act of pressing together. Compression fracture of the vertebrae are most common.

**Congenital** - Existing at birth. Referring to certain mental or physical traits, anomalies, malformations, diseases, which may have been inherited.

**Crepitus** - A clinical sign characterized by a peculiar crackling, crinkly, or grating feeling or sound under the skin or in the joints. Crepitus in a joint can represent cartilage wear in the joint space.

**CRNA** - Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist

**CRNP** - Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner

**d/c** - Discontinue . . . Discharge

**Decompression** - In general, the removal of pressure. In surgery, a procedure to remove pressure on a structure, as in decompression of the spinal cord.

**Degenerative Arthritis** - Also known as **osteoarthritis** and **degenerative joint disease**. This is inflammation, breakdown and eventual loss of the cartilage of the joints. It is the most common arthritis, affecting usually the hands, feet, spine, and large weight-bearing joints, such as the hips and knees.

- ★ **Degenerative Disc Disease** - The discs and the joints that stack the vertebrae (facet joints) are partly composed of cartilage. These areas are subject to wear and tear over time (degenerative changes). The gradual deterioration of the disc between the vertebrae is referred to as degenerative disc disease.

**Denervation** - Loss of nerve supply.

**Desiccated Disc** - A disc without any moisture or fluid inside.

- ★ **Discectomy** - Excision, in part or whole, of an intervertebral disc.

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- **Dislocated Shoulder** - Dislocations of the shoulder occur when the head of the humerus is dislocated from its socket. These are described by the location of the humeral head after it has been dislocated. 90% or more of shoulder dislocations are anterior dislocations, meaning that the humeral head has been moved to a position in front of the joint. Posterior dislocations are those in which the humeral head has moved backward toward the shoulder blade.

**DO** - Doctor of Osteopathy

**Dorsal** - Pertaining to the back or posterior. Some of the dorsal surfaces of the body are the back, buttocks, calves, and the knuckle side of the hand.

**Dura** - The outermost, toughest, and most fibrous of the three membranes (meninges) covering the brain and the spinal cord. Dura is short for **dura mater**.

- ★ **Dural Sac** - The membranous sac that encases the spinal cord within the bony structure of the vertebral column. Dural refers to the dura, the name of the membrane around the spinal cord (and brain, too).

**Dx** - Diagnosis

**Dysfunction** - Abnormal or difficult function.

**Ecchymosis** - Skin discoloration caused by the escape of blood into the tissues from ruptured blood vessels.

**Effusion** - Too much fluid, an outpouring of fluid.

**Embolism** - An obstruction of a blood vessel by a blood clot or other body.

- ▼ **Epicondylitis** - An inflammation or damage to the area of an epicondyle of bone. An epicondyle is a projection of bone above a condyle (a rounded prominence at the end of a bone, usually where the bone connects to another bone) where ligaments and tendons are attached. Two common types of epicondylitis are tennis elbow and golfer's elbow. Tennis elbow is also known as lateral epicondylitis, which is an overuse injury to the area of the lateral (outside) epicondyle of the elbow end of the upper arm bone (humerus). Golfer's elbow (medial epicondylitis) is an overuse injury similar to tennis elbow, but in this case the damage occurs in the area of the medial (inside) epicondyle of the upper arm bone.

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**Epidural** - Outside the dura mater.

**Etiology** - The science and study of the causes of disease and their mode of operation.

**ETOH** - Alcohol . . . Alcoholic

**Extension** - The process of straightening a limb.

**External Fixation** - A procedure that stabilizes and joins the ends of fractured (broken) bones by a splint or cast.

**External Rotation** - Rotation away from the center of the body. Also known as **lateral rotation**.

- ★ **Extruded Disc** - Occurs when the annulus (ring-like structure) tears all the way through and some disc material actually pushes out beyond the boundaries of the disc and nearby ligaments, but has not broken away from the disc itself.

**Facet** - A small, smooth, flat area on a bone or other firm structure.

- ★ **Facet Arthropathy** - Arthritis of the facet joints. Arthritis in the facet joints can develop from: wear and tear (decreases space between vertebrae which causes the facet joints to rub together), previous back injury, fractures, torn ligaments, or disc problems.
- ★ **Facetectomy** - Surgical removal of a (vertebra) facet. A fusion at that level may be required.
- ★ **Facet Joints** - Joints (similar to knee and elbow joints) which link the 24 vertebrae together and give them the flexibility to move against each other. The facets are the "bony knobs" that meet between each vertebra in the posterior of the spine. There are two facet joints between each pair of vertebrae, one on each side. They extend and overlap each other to form a joint between the neighboring vertebra facet joints. The facet joints give the spine its flexibility.

**Fascia** - A sheet of fibrous tissue that covers the body beneath the skin; it also encloses muscles and groups of muscles and separates their several layers or groups.

**Fascitis** - Inflammation of fascia.

**FCE** - Functional Capacity Evaluation

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**Fibromyalgia** - A chronic condition causing pain, stiffness, and tenderness of the muscles, tendons, and joints. Fibromyalgia is also characterized by restless sleep, awakening feeling tired, fatigue, anxiety, depression, and disturbances in bowel function. Fibromyalgia was formerly known as **fibrositis**.

**Fibrosis** - Formation of fibrous tissue as a reparative or reactive process.

**Flexion** - The process of bending or being bent.

**Fluoroscopy** - An x-ray procedure that makes it possible to see internal organs in motion.

**Foot Drop** - Dropping of the front of the foot due to weakness or paralysis of the anterior muscles of the lower leg. Foot drop results in a “steppage gait”, which means the advancing foot is lifted high in order that the toes may clear the ground. Foot drop can be due to a number of conditions, including injury to the muscles that dorsiflex the foot or to the nerves to those muscles, a neuropathy, multiple sclerosis, a stroke, drug toxicity, and diabetes.

**Foramen** - A natural opening or passage, usually through a bone. The plural of foramen is foramina.

- ★ **Foraminotomy** - An operation on an opening, usually to surgically enlarge the intervertebral foramen.

**FROM** - Full Range of Motion

- **Frozen Shoulder** - A frozen shoulder is a shoulder joint with significant loss of range of motion in all directions. The range of motion is limited not only when the patient attempts motion, but also when the doctor attempts to move the joint fully while the patient relaxes. A frozen shoulder is also referred to as **adhesive capsulitis**.

**Fusion** - The joining together of a bone or joint through surgery; bone fusion.

**Fx** - Fracture

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- **Glenoid Labrum** - A ring of fibrocartilage that runs around the cavity (glenoid cavity) of the scapula (wing bone) in which the head of the humerus (the bone in the upper arm) fits. Injuries to the glenoid labrum can occur from chronic trauma due to repetitive shoulder motion or from acute trauma. Signs and symptoms of a glenoid labrum injury include pain accompanying overhead arm motion, occasional pain in the shoulder at night or during daily activities, decreased range of motion, and loss of strength in the shoulder. Treatment may include anti-inflammatory medication and rest. Exercises to strengthen the rotator cuff muscles may then be recommended. If these measures are not effective, arthroscopic surgery may be necessary.

**Greenstick Fracture** - A fracture where one side of the bone is broken and the other is bent (like a greenstick).

**HA** - Headache

- ▲ **Hangman's Fracture** - A broken neck involving a fracture of an upper cervical vertebra similar to the injury suffered in death by hanging. The fracture always affects the cervical vertebra called the axis (C2) with or without subluxation (slippage) of C2 on C3. A hangman's fracture often causes death by suffocation.

**HBP** - High Blood Pressure

**Hematoma** - A collection of blood outside of a blood vessel. It occurs because the wall of a blood vessel, artery, vein, or capillary has been damaged and blood has leaked into tissues where it does not belong. The hematoma may be tiny, with just a dot of blood, or it can be large and cause significant swelling.

- ★ **Hemilaminectomy** - Removal of a portion of a vertebral lamina, usually performed for exploration of, access to, or decompression of the intraspinal contents.
- ★ **Herniated (Ruptured) Disc** - As disc breakdown due to age or injury, the softer central portion can rupture (herniate) through the surrounding outer ring (annulus fibrosis). The protrusion of a degenerated or fragmented disc may result in compression of a nerve root in the spinal canal. The most common location for a herniated disc to occur is in the disc at the level between the 4th and 5th lumbar vertebrae in the low back. A disc herniation cannot be seen on regular X-rays; it can only be seen on MRI. Regular X-Rays show disc degeneration, which shows up as a decrease in space between the vertebrae. This is also frequently referred to as a **disc protrusion**.

- ★ **Herniation** - Abnormal protrusion of tissue through an opening. For example, an intervertebral disc (one situated between the vertebral bodies) can protrude and impinge on a nerve root.

**HNP** - Herniated Nucleus Pulposus

**HTN** - Hypertension

**Hx** - History

**Idiopathic** - A disease of unknown cause or origin.

**Impacted Fracture** - A fracture in which one broken end is wedged into another broken end of the same fracture.

**Internal Fixation** - A procedure that stabilizes and joins the ends of a fractured bone by means of mechanical devices such as metal plates, pins, rods, wires, or screws.

**Internal Rotation** - Rotation towards the center of the body. Also known as **medial rotation**.

- **Lachman's Sign** - A medical test used for examining the Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) in the knee for patients where there is a suspicion of a torn ACL.
- ★ **Lamina** - A plate or layer. For example, the lamina arcus vertebrae, usually just called the lamina, are plates of bone in each vertebral body.
- ★ **Laminectomy** - A surgical procedure in which the posterior arch of a vertebra is removed. Laminectomy is done to relieve pressure on the spinal cord or on the nerve roots that emerge from the spinal canal. The procedure may be used to treat a slipped or herniated disc or to treat spinal stenosis.

**Laparoscope** - An instrument through which structures within the body can be seen. A small surgical incision (cut) is made to permit the laparoscope to enter the body. With laparoscopic surgery, a number of surgical procedures can be performed without the need for a large surgical incision.

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**Lateral** - The side of the body or a body part that is farthest from the middle or center of the body. Typically, lateral refers to the outer side of the body part, but it is also used to refer to the side of a body part. For example, when referring to the knee, lateral refers to the side of the knee farthest from the opposite knee. The opposite of lateral is medial.

- ▼ **Lateral Epicondylitis** - A painful injury to the tendon that is attached to the outer part of the elbow due to repetitive twisting of the wrist or forearm which causes irritation and inflammation of the extensor tendon. This tendon attaches to the lateral epicondyle of the humerus. The condition is also known as **tennis elbow**. Any action that involves repetitive twisting of the wrist or forearm can lead to this injury.

**LBT** - Low Back Tenderness . . . Low Back Trouble

**LBP** - Low Back Pain . . . Low Back Pressure

**LE** - Lower Extremity

**Ligament** - A tough band of connective tissue that connects various structures, such as two bones.

- ★ **Lordosis** - Inward curvature of the spine. The spine is not supposed to be absolutely straight, so some degree of curvature is normal. When the curve exceeds the usual range, it may be due to musculoskeletal disease or simple poor posture. Treatment is usually by physical therapy; although, in severe cases, surgery, casting, and/or bracing may be required.

**LP** - Lumbar Puncture

- ★ **Lumbar Radiculopathy** - Nerve irritation caused by damage to the discs between the vertebrae. Damage to the disc occurs because of degeneration (wear and tear) of the outer ring of the disc, traumatic injury, or both. As a result, the central softer portion of the disc can rupture (herniate) through the outer ring of the disc and about the spinal cord or its nerves as they exit the bony spinal column. This rupture is what causes the commonly recognized pain of "sciatica" that shoots down the leg.

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- ★ **Lumbar Spinal Stenosis** - A condition whereby either the spinal canal (central stenosis) or vertebral foramen (foraminal stenosis) becomes narrowed, leading to compression of the spinal nerves. Symptoms are pain in the lower back and weakness, numbness, pain, and loss of sensation in the legs. The most common cause of lumbar spinal stenosis is degenerative arthritis (osteoarthritis), but other causes can include tumor, infection, and various metabolic bone disorders. Treatment may involve anti-inflammatory medications, corticosteroids, medications to treat nerve pain, physical therapy, and in severe cases, surgery. Also referred to as **lumbar stenosis**, or **spinal stenosis**.
- ★ **Lumbar Strain** - A stretching injury to the ligaments, tendons, and/or muscles of the low back. The stretching incident results in microscopic tears of varying degrees in these tissues. Lumbar strain is one of the most common causes of low back pain. The injury can occur because of overuse, improper use, or trauma. It is classified as "acute" if it has been present for days to weeks. If the strain lasts longer than 3 months, it is referred to as "chronic."

**Luxation** - A complete dislocation of a joint. A partial or incomplete dislocation of a joint is a subluxation.

- ▼ **Malleolus** - Bony prominence on either side of the ankle.
- **McMurray's Test** - A test used to evaluate individuals for tears in the meniscus of the knee. It is a rotation test for demonstrating torn cartilage of the knee. If pain or a "click" is felt during the external rotation, this constitutes a "positive McMurray test" for a tear in the medial meniscus. Likewise, if when internally rotating the leg, it causes a palpable or even audible click, it constitutes a "positive test" for a tear of the lateral meniscus.

**Medial** - Pertaining to the middle; in or toward the middle; nearer the middle of the body. Medial is as opposed to lateral. For example, the medial side of the knee is the side closest to the other knee, whereas the lateral side of the knee is the outside of the knee.

- ▼ **Median Nerve** - The median nerve is most commonly injured through compression in carpal tunnel syndrome, resulting in a loss of ability to oppose the thumb (thus creating "ape hand") and loss of sensation over the radial portion of the hand.
- **Meniscus** - A crescent-shaped structure. In the knee, it is a crescent-shaped cartilage pad between the two joints formed by the femur (the thigh bone) and the tibia (the shin bone). The meniscus acts as a smooth surface for the joint to move on.
- ▼ **Metacarpals** - Five bones extending from the wrist to the fingers.

- ▼ **Metatarsals** - Five bones extending from the heel (the tarsus) to the toes. The metatarsals are numbered from the inside out, so the first metatarsal would be the big toe.

**MMI** - Maximum Medical Improvement

**Myalgia** - Pain in a muscle; or pain in multiple muscles.

**Myofascial Pain Syndrome (MPS)** - A condition characterized by chronic pain in the muscle tissues, similar to fibromyalgia. MPS is sometimes the aftermath of injury. Pain medication, anti-inflammatory medication, and therapies aimed at relaxing the muscles tissues (such as massage, chiropractic manipulation, and some forms of acupuncture) have been reported as beneficial.

**Necrosis** - The death of living cells or tissues. Necrosis can be due, for example, to ischemia (lack of blood flow).

**Nerve Block** - A procedure in which an anesthetic agent is injected directly near a nerve to block pain. A nerve block is a form of regional anesthesia.

**Neuralgia** - Pain of a severe, throbbing, or stabbing character in the course or distribution of a nerve.

**Neuritis** - Inflammation of a nerve.

**Neuropathy** - A term for any disorder affecting any segment of the nervous system.

**NKDA** - No Known Drug Allergies

**Non-Organic Pain** - Pain which has no identifiable physical cause and cannot be linked or traced to any specific disorder or abnormality. It usually stems from psychological factors.

**Nucleus Pulposus** - The soft, fibrocartilage central portion of the intervertebral disc.

**NWB** - Non Weight-Bearing

**Objective** - Those facts that are observable and measurable by the nurse or physician.

**Occlusion** - The act of closing or the state of being closed.

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**Occupational Disease (OD)** - A disease due to a factor in a person's occupation.

**Open Reduction** - Reduction by manipulation of bone, after surgical exposure of the site of the fracture.

**Open Fracture** - A fracture in which the bone is sticking through the skin. Also called a **compound fracture**.

**Organic Pain** - Pain resulting from a disorder, abnormality, or chemical imbalance in the body. Unlike non-organic pain, organic pain has a traceable and identifiable cause.

**Palliative Treatment** - Treatment to alleviate symptoms without curing the disease.

**Paracentesis** - The removal of fluid from a body cavity using a needle, trocar, cannula (hollow tube), or other hollow instrument.

**Paresthesia** - An abnormal sensation of the skin, such as numbness, tingling, pricking, burning, or creeping on the skin that has no objective cause.

- ★ **Pars Interarticularis** - Also known as “Pars”. The small, protruding bony segment of each vertebra which connects the joints in the back of the spine. A defect in this portion of the spine leads to a condition called **spondylolysis**.
- **Patellar Apprehension Test** - Test is used to assess the possibility that the patient may have sustained a patellar dislocation which spontaneously reduced. The test provokes the same sensations which would have been present when the dislocation occurred and therefore will elicit a reactive contraction of the quadriceps muscles by the patient in an attempt to avoid a recurrence of the dislocation.
- **Patellar Tendonitis** - An injury that affects the tendon connecting your kneecap (patella) to your shin bone. Also called **patellar tendonopathy** or **jumper's knee** because it often occurs in basketball and volleyball and other high impact sports. There may be sudden aching and pain with subsequent swelling just below the kneecap and the knee may feel weak. Treatment includes rest, ice, and medications to relieve pain and inflammation.

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- **Patellofemoral Syndrome (PFS)** - Abnormal softening of the cartilage under the kneecap (patella). This is also known as **Chondromalacia patella**. This is the most common cause of chronic knee pain and results from degeneration of cartilage due to poor alignment of the kneecap as it slides over the lower end of the thigh bone (femur). The symptoms of PFS are generally a vague discomfort of the inner knee area, aggravated by activity (running, jumping, climbing, or descending stairs) or by prolonged sitting with knees in a moderately bent position (pain upon arising from a desk or seat). Some patients may also have a vague sense of "tightness" or "fullness" in the knee area.
- ▼ **Phalen's Sign** - A diagnostic test for **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**. Performed by resting your elbows on a flat surface such as a desk, with your elbows bent and your forearms up. Then flex your wrists, letting your hands hang down for about 60 seconds. If you feel tingling, numbness, or pain in the fingers within 60 seconds, you have a positive Phalen's Sign.
- ▼ **Plantar Fasciitis** - A painful non-inflammatory degenerative condition of the foot. The plantar fascia is a thick fibrous band of tissue originating on the bottom surface of the calcaneus (heel bone) and extending along the sole of the foot towards the five toes. It is commonly associated with long periods of work-related weight bearing. Among non-athletes, it is associated with being over weight and/or obese. The pain is usually felt on the underside of the heel and is often most intense with the first steps of the day. Another symptom is that the sufferer has difficulty bending the foot so that the toes are brought toward the shin.

**PMH** - Past Medical History

- **Popliteal Space** - A diamond-shaped space behind the knee.
- Posterior** - Denotes the back surface of the body. Often used to indicate the position of one structure relative to another, nearer the back of the body.
- **Posterior Cruciate Ligament (PCL)** - The knee joint is surrounded by a joint capsule with ligaments strapping the inside and outside of the joint (collateral ligaments), as well as crossing within the joint (cruciate ligaments). These ligaments provide stability and strength to the knee joint. The posterior cruciate ligament (cruciate means shaped like a cross) crosses behind the anterior cruciate ligament within the joint.
  - **Posterior Drawer Sign** - In a knee examination, the forward or backward sliding of the tibia under applied stress, which indicates laxity or a tear of the anterior (forward slide) or posterior (backward slide) cruciate ligament of the knee.

**PRN** - As Needed . . . As Required

**Prognosis** - A forecast of the probable course and/or outcome of a disease.

**Pronation** - Rotation of the forearm and hand so that the palm is down (and the corresponding movement of the foot and leg with the sole down). The opposite of supination.

**Prone** - The body when lying face down. The opposite of supine.

**Protrusion** - The state of being thrust forward or projected.

**Proximal** - Toward the beginning, the nearer of two (or more) items. For example, the proximal end of the femur is part of the hip joint, and the shoulder is proximal to the elbow. The opposite of proximal is distal.

**Psychogenic** - Caused by the mind or emotions.

**q** - Every

**q2h** - Every 2 Hours

**q3h** - Every 3 Hours

**qd** - Every Day

**qh** - Every Hour

**qid** - Four Times Daily

**Radiculopathy** - A condition due to a compressed nerve in the spine that can cause pain, numbness, tingling, or weakness along the course of the nerve. Radiculopathy can occur in any part of the spine, but it is most common in the lower back (lumbar radiculopathy) and in the neck (cervical radiculopathy). It is less commonly found in the middle portion of the spine (thoracic radiculopathy).

**ROM** - Range of Motion

**Referred Pain** - A term used to describe the phenomenon of pain perceived at a site adjacent to or at a distance from the site of an injury's origin.

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- ▼ **Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD)** - A condition that features a group of typical symptoms, including pain (often "burning" type), tenderness, and swelling of an extremity associated with varying degrees of sweating, warmth and/or coolness, flushing, discoloration, and shiny skin.

**Resection** - A surgical procedure performed for the specific purpose of removal, as in removal of articular ends of one or both bones forming a joint.

**Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)** - A generalized disease, occurring more often in women, that causes chronic inflammation of the joints, especially those of the hands and feet. Rheumatoid arthritis can also cause inflammation of the tissue around the joints, as well as in other organs in the body. The condition is often chronic and progressive, leading to deformities and disability.

- **Rotator Cuff Tear** - The rotator cuff is the group of four tendons that stabilize the shoulder joint. The tendons hook up to the four muscles that move the shoulder in various directions. An injury to the rotator cuff is a tear of one or more of the four tendons of the rotator cuff muscles. A rotator cuff injury can include any type of irritation or damage to your rotator cuff muscles or tendons. Rotator cuff tears are among the most common conditions affecting the shoulder. The tendons of the rotator cuff, not the muscles, are most commonly torn. Of the four tendons, the supraspinatus is most frequently torn; the tear usually occurs at its point of insertion onto the humeral head at the greater tuberosity.

**R/O** - Rule Out

**Rx** - Prescription

**̄** - Without

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- ★ **Sacroiliac Joint Pain** - The sacroiliac joint or SI joint is the joint between the sacrum, at the base of the spine, and the ilium of the pelvis which are joined by ligaments. As with most other joints in the body, the SI joints have a cartilage layer covering the bone. The cartilage allows for some movement and acts as a shock absorber between the bones. When this cartilage is damaged or worn away the, bones begin to rub on each other and degenerative arthritis (osteoarthritis) occurs. This is the most common cause of SI joint pain. Also, any condition that alters the normal walking pattern places increased stress on the SI joints. This could include a leg length discrepancy (one leg longer than the other), or pain in the hip, knee, ankle, or foot. Patients with severe pain in the lower extremity often develop problems with either the lower back (lumbar spine) or SI joints. In most cases, if the underlying problem is treated, the associated lumbar spine or SI joint pain will also improve.
  - ★ **Sciatic Nerve** - This is the largest nerve in the body. It begins from nerve roots in the lumbar part of the spinal cord (in the low back) and extends through the buttock area and goes down into the legs.
  - ★ **Sciatica** - Pain resulting from irritation of the sciatic nerve. The pain is typically felt at the back of the thigh. While sciatica is most commonly a result of a disc herniation directly pressing on the nerve, any cause of irritation or inflammation of this nerve can reproduce the symptoms of sciatica.
- Sclerosis** - Stiffening of a structure. A hardening of tissue and other anatomical features.
- ★ **Scoliosis** - A disorder that causes an abnormal curve of the spine or backbone. The spine has normal curves when looking from the side, but it should appear straight when looking from the front. Kyphosis is a curve seen from the side in which the spine is bent forward. Lordosis is a curve seen from the side in which the spine is bent backward.
  - **Shoulder Impingement** - One of the most common causes of pain in the shoulder. It results from pressure on the rotator cuff from the shoulder blade (scapula) as the arm is lifted. The rotator cuff is a tendon linking four muscles: the supraspinatus, the infraspinatus, the subscapularis, and the teres minor. These muscles cover the "ball" of the shoulder (head of the humerus). The muscles work together to lift and rotate the shoulder. The acromion is the front edge of the shoulder blade. It sits over and in front of the humeral head. As the arm is lifted, the acromion rubs, or "impinges" on, the surface of the rotator cuff. This causes pain and limits movement.
  - **SLAP Tear** - An injury to the shoulder, wherein the glenoid labrum (cartilage attached to the outside of the glenoid cavity) is affected. **SLAP** stands for “**S**uperior **L**abral tear from **A**nterior to **P**osterior”. Also known as a **SLAP Lesion**. A SLAP tear or lesion occurs when there is damage to the uppermost area of the labrum.

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**SOAP** - Subjective, Objective, Assessment, and Plans

**Spinal (Cord) Compression** - Develops when the spinal cord is compressed by bone fragments from a vertebral fracture, a tumor, abscess, ruptured intervertebral disc, or other lesion. It is regarded as a medical emergency independent of its cause and requires swift diagnosis and treatment to prevent long-term disability due to irreversible spinal cord injury.

**Spinal Fusion** - A surgical procedure in which two or more of the vertebrae in the spine are united together so that motion no longer occurs between them. Bone grafts are usually placed around the section of the spine to be fused. The body then heals the grafts over several months and joins the vertebrae together. The bone for the graft may be taken from another bone in the patient (autograft) or from a bone bank (allograft). Metal rods, plates, screws, and cages may also be used as an internal splint to hold the vertebrae together while the bone grafts heal and the spine fuses.

**Spinal Stenosis** - Narrowing of the spaces in the spine, resulting in compression of the nerve roots or spinal cord by bony spurs or soft tissues, such as discs, in the spinal canal. This occurs most often in the lumbar spine (in the low back), but also occurs in the cervical spine (in the neck) and less often in the thoracic spine (in the upper back).

- ★ **Spondylitis** - Inflammation of one or more of the vertebrae.
- ★ **Spondylolisthesis** - A condition of the spine whereby one of the vertebra slips forward or backward compared to the next vertebra. Forward slippage of one vertebra on another is referred to as anterolisthesis, while backward slippage is referred to as retrolisthesis. Spondylolisthesis can lead to a deformity of the spine, as well as a narrowing of the spinal canal (central spinal stenosis) or compression of the exiting nerve roots (foraminal stenosis).
- ★ **Spondylolysis** - A defect in the spine due to degeneration, deficient development (congenital), or fracture of the pars interarticularis (pars) in the lumbar region. The majority occur at L5, the lowest lumbar vertebra. In spondylolysis, there is definite separation of the pars interarticularis.
- ★ **Spondylosis** - Degeneration of the disc spaces between the vertebrae. This finding in the spine is commonly associated with osteoarthritis.

**Sporadic** - Occurring irregularly, haphazardly, without regularity.

**Sprain** - An injury to a ligament that results from overuse or trauma, but without dislocation or a fracture. Sprains occur when there is a stretch or tear in one or more ligaments. Treatment for sprains can be thought of as having two stages. The goal during the first stage is to reduce swelling and pain. At this stage, doctors usually advise patients to follow a formula of **Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation (RICE)** for the first 24 to 48 hours after the injury. The doctor may also recommend an over-the-counter or prescription nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) drug, such as aspirin or ibuprofen, to help decrease pain and inflammation. Depending on the severity and location of the sprain, support bracing can help. Local cortisone injections are sometimes given for persistent inflammation. For people with a moderate or severe sprain, particularly of the ankle, a hard cast may be applied. Severe sprains may require surgery to repair the torn ligaments.

- ★ **Straight Leg Raising Test** - This test is also called **Lasègue's sign** or **Lasègue's test**, and is done during the physical examination to determine whether a patient with low back pain has an underlying herniated disc, mostly located at L5 (fifth lumbar spinal nerve), S1 (the first sacral spinal nerve) or S2 (the second sacral spinal nerve). With the patient lying down on his/her back, the examiner lifts the patient's leg while the knee is straight. The test is positive if sciatic pain is reproduced.

**Strain** - An injury to either a muscle or a tendon. Depending on the severity of the injury, a strain may be a simple overstretch of the muscle or tendon, a twisting or pulling of a muscle or tendon, or it can result in a partial or complete tear. Treatment for strains can be thought of as having two stages. The goal during the first stage is to reduce swelling and pain. At this stage, doctors usually advise patients to follow a formula of **Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation (RICE)** for the first 24 to 48 hours after the injury. The doctor may also recommend an over-the-counter or prescription nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) drug, such as aspirin or ibuprofen, to help decrease pain and inflammation. Severe strains may require surgery to repair the torn muscle or tendon.

**Stress Fracture** - A fracture caused by repetitive stress, as may occur in sports, strenuous exercise, or heavy physical labor. Stress fractures are especially common in the metatarsal bones of foot, particularly in runners. Osteoporosis increases the possibility of stress fractures. Treatment is rest, disuse, and sometimes splinting or casting to prevent reinjury during healing.

**Subdural** - Below the dura, the outermost, toughest, and most fibrous of the three membranes (meninges) covering the brain and the spinal cord. A subdural hematoma is a collection of blood beneath the dura.

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**Subjective** - A patient's perspective, particular feelings, beliefs, and/or desires.

**Subluxation** - Partial or incomplete dislocation of a joint. A complete dislocation is a luxation.

**Supination** - Rotation of the forearm and hand so that the palm is up (and the corresponding movement of the foot and leg with the sole up). The opposite of pronation.

**Supine** - The body when lying face upward. The opposite of prone.

**Sx** - Surgery . . . Symptoms

**Symptomatic** - Showing signs or symptoms. Symptoms are signs of disease or injury and are usually noticed by the patient. When someone has the common symptoms associated with a disease or condition, they are considered symptomatic. When a disease exists without noticeable symptoms, the patient is asymptomatic.

**Synovectomy** - Excision of a portion or all of the synovial membrane of a joint.

**Synovial Fluid** - The slippery fluid that lubricates joints and provides nutrients to the cartilage. Also known as the **synovia**.

**Synovial Chondromatosis** - A disorder of a joint featuring a change to the normal joint lining (synovium) tissue's cellular structure to form cartilage tissue. This condition is rare. Synovial chondromatosis leads to pain in the affected joint, as well as limitation in range of motion and a locking sensation. The cause is not known. Synovial chondromatosis generally affects only a single joint, with the most common joints being the knee, hip, or elbow. Synovial chondromatosis can be diagnosed by way of a CAT scan or MRI scan. Treatment typically involves surgical removal of the joint lining tissue.

- **Synovial Cyst** - Swelling in the space behind the knee (the popliteal space). The swelling is composed of a membrane-lined sac filled with synovial fluid that has escaped from the joint. Commonly called **Baker's cyst**.

**Synovitis** - Inflammation of the synovial membrane, the lining of the joint.

**Tachycardia** - Rapid heart rate, usually defined as greater than 100 beats per minute.

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- ▼ **Tarsal Tunnel Syndrome** - When the sensory nerve that passes through the tarsal tunnel is irritated by pressure in the tunnel, numbness and tingling of the foot and toes can be felt. This condition is referred to as "tarsal tunnel syndrome." Tarsal tunnel syndrome is far less common than carpal tunnel syndrome. It is treated similarly.

**Tendon** - A fibrous cord of tissue connecting bone and muscle.

**Tendonitis** - Inflammation of a tendon.

- ★ **Thecal Sac** - In the lumbar spine (below the L1 disc level), there is no spinal cord. Instead the nerve roots hang like a horse's tail in an enclosed sac, which is called the thecal sac. The thecal sac, which protects the dangling nerve roots, is made up of two distinct, but tightly bound layers, called the dura mater and arachnoid mater. A clear fluid, called Cerebral Spinal Fluid (CSF), is also found within the thecal sac. This fluid protects the nerve roots from a pressure injury and also supplies nutrients. A compression can result from disc herniation, swollen tissue in the surrounding epidural space, tumors, or anything that can invade the surrounding area. If it's a disc herniation, since it's below the level of the spinal cord, it will compress nerve roots, typically compressing the nerve below the level of the disc herniation; i.e., an L4-5 herniation will compress nerve root L5.

**Therapeutic** - That part of medicine concerned specifically with the treatment of a disease, a disorder, or an injury. Something that is therapeutic is good for the individual. It is often healthy.

- ▲ **Thoracic Outlet Syndrome** - A condition whereby symptoms are produced from compression of nerves or blood vessels, or both, because of an inadequate passageway through an area (thoracic outlet) between the base of the neck and the armpit. The thoracic outlet is surrounded by muscle, bone, and other tissues. Any condition that results in enlargement or movement of the tissues of or near the thoracic outlet can cause thoracic outlet syndrome, such as muscle enlargement, injuries, and weight gain. Often no specific cause is found.

**tid** - Three Times a Day

- ▼ **Tinel's Sign** - A diagnostic test for **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**. Performed by the health professional tapping on the inside of your wrist over the median nerve. If you feel tingling, numbness, "pins and needles," or a mild "electrical shock" sensation in your hand when tapped on the wrist, you have a positive Tinel's Sign.

**TKR** - Total Knee Replacement

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**Torsion Fracture** - A fracture resulting from twisting of the limb.

**Transverse Fracture** - A fracture, the line of which forms a right angle with the longitudinal axis of the bone.

**Tx** - Treatment

**UE** - Upper Extremity

- ▼ **Ulnar Nerve** - A major nerve in the upper extremity. The ulnar nerve begins in the lower cervical and upper thoracic portions of the spinal cord (from C7 to T1), travels through the brachial plexus, down into the arm, through the cubital tunnel at the elbow, and supplies both the sensory and motor nerves to parts of the forearm and hand.
- ▼ **Ulnar Neuropathy** - An inflammation or compression of the ulnar nerve, resulting in paresthesia (numbness, tingling, and pain) in the outer side of the arm and hand near the little finger.

**Valgus Deformity** - A condition in which a segment of a joint or bone is angled outward. Such types of deformities are most often present in hips, knees, and feet. When necessary, these deformities can, to some degree, be surgically repaired. The opposite of varus.

**Varus Deformity** - A deformity of a bone or joint in which the distal end bends inward. The distal end is the end furthest from the point of attachment. For example, the distal end of the femur is the end which connects to the knee, because the femur's point of attachment is at the pelvis. Varus deformities can occur in a number of bones and joints in the body, and they can vary in severity, generally getting worse if they are left untreated. The opposite of valgus.

- ★ **Waddell's Sign** - A group of physical signs that may indicate a non-organic or psychological component to chronic low back pain. They have been used to detect "malingering" or "symptom magnification" in patients with back pain. There are five test categories and testing takes less than one minute. (1) Tenderness tests: superficial and diffuse tenderness and/or non-anatomic tenderness; (2) Simulation tests: these are based on movements which produce pain, without actually causing that movement, such as axial loading and pain on simulated rotation; (3) Distraction tests: positive tests are rechecked when the patient's attention is distracted, such as a straight leg raise test; (4) Regional disturbances: regional weakness or sensory changes which deviate from accepted neuroanatomy; and (5) Overreaction: subjective signs regarding the patient's demeanor and reaction to testing. An individual sign in one category symbolizes a

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positive Waddell's Sign. When three or more categories are positive, the finding is considered clinically significant and typically is connected with depression, hysteria, and hypochondriasis.

- ▲ **Whiplash Injury** - Whiplash is an injury caused by the neck and head being thrown suddenly backward then forward upon impact. The impact forces the neck and head beyond their normal range of movement, causing tissue damage and pain. Any or all of the following symptoms may be present: pain in the shoulders; pain between the shoulder blades; pain in one or both arms; fatigue; dizziness; vision problems; ringing in the ears (tinnitus); poor concentration or memory; neck pain/stiffness; tight and/or sore muscles; tenderness in the muscles; low back pain; and trouble sleeping.

**WNL** - Within Normal Limits

**X-Ray (AP)** - An X-Ray in which the beams pass from front-to-back (**Antero**Posterior).  
Opposite of X-Ray (PA).

**X-Ray (lateral)** - An X-Ray taken from the side.

**X-Ray (PA)** - An X-Ray in which the rays pass through the body from back-to-front (**Postero**Anterior). Opposite of X-Ray (AP).