

## What are Tarlov cysts?

Tarlov cysts, also known as perineurial cysts are small fluid filled sacs, located in the spinal canal of the lower (lumbar-sacral) region of the spinal cord.



## Common Symptoms

Not everyone who has Tarlov cysts has symptoms. However, some common symptoms may include: back pain, pain in the

perineum and/or buttocks, sciatica, urinary incontinence, difficulty walking, severe lower abdominal pain, painful urination, pelvic pain, and painful intercourse.

## What are we studying?

The Nerve Injury Unit, Dept of Neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital is interested in whether pelvic pain symptoms in some women may be due to the presence of these cysts. This complication has not yet been fully researched so it is not yet known how to effectively prevent or treat it.

Our laboratory uses lumbar-sacral magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to detect the presence of Tarlov cysts. Participants will also be asked to complete some questionnaires about their level of pain and their quality of life.

If you are accepted for this

study, we will ask permission to review your medical records. We may also ask you to be examined by your own doctor to rule out other possible causes prior participation.

Participants will come to the Charlestown Navy Yard facility of Massachusetts General Hospital for a single visit that usually lasts about 30 minutes. We will cover the cost of parking.

## Who can participate in this study?

Women aged 18 years or older, who are fluent English speakers and who have pelvic pain that is not explained by other medical causes. This includes women who have been diagnosed with vulvodynia, vestibulodynia, and vaginismus. We require a note from your doctor attesting to your diagnosis of pelvic pain.

You can participate whether or not you are receiving treatment for pelvic pain. You do not need to stop taking any medication during the study.

This is *NOT* a treatment study.

There are no medications or new procedures being tested. We do not stop or change any medications your doctor may have prescribed.

Because this study involves MRI, we cannot include women who are pregnant, claustrophobic, or who have metal anywhere in their bodies.

### **Whom can I contact about the study?**

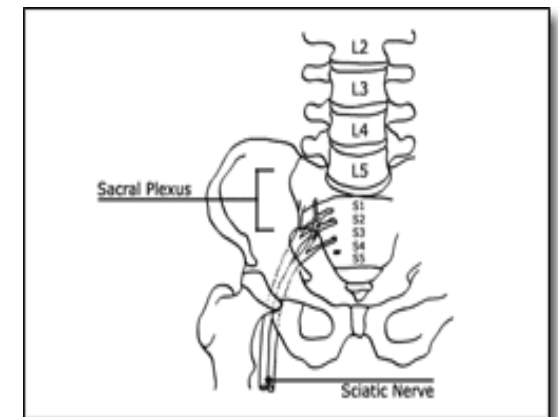
If you are interested in more information about this research study, please call The Nerve Injury Unit at 617-726-9391 and talk to one of our study staff.



MASSACHUSETTS  
GENERAL HOSPITAL

## **Tarlov Cysts and Pelvic Pain**

**Do you or someone you know,  
suffer from unexplained pelvic  
pain?**



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