



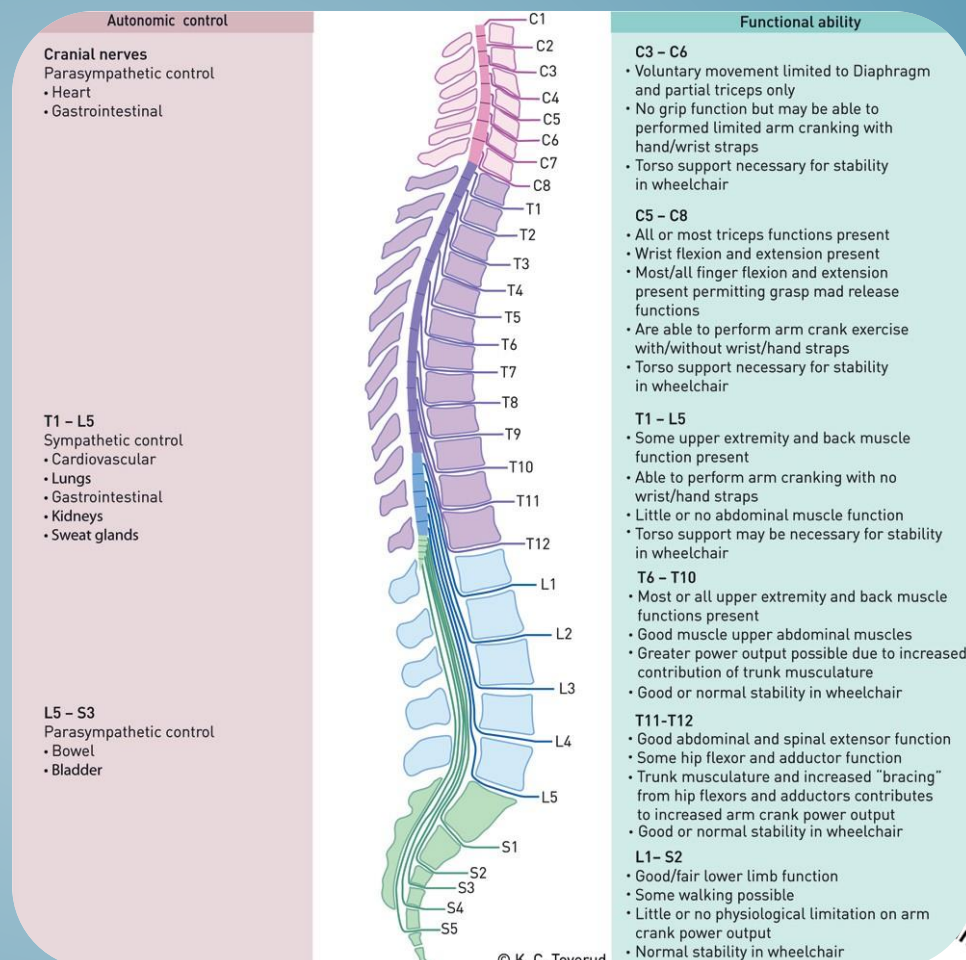
Autonomic Dysreflexia

(Hyper-reflexia)



What is Autonomic Dysreflexia?

- It is a term used to describe the body's autonomic response to a painful stimulus perceived below the level of injury with can cause severe, sudden hypertension (high blood pressure).
- If left untreated it can lead to stroke, epileptic fit or even death so it is paramount that it is treated as a medical emergency.
- It is frequently seen at an injury level of T6 or above.

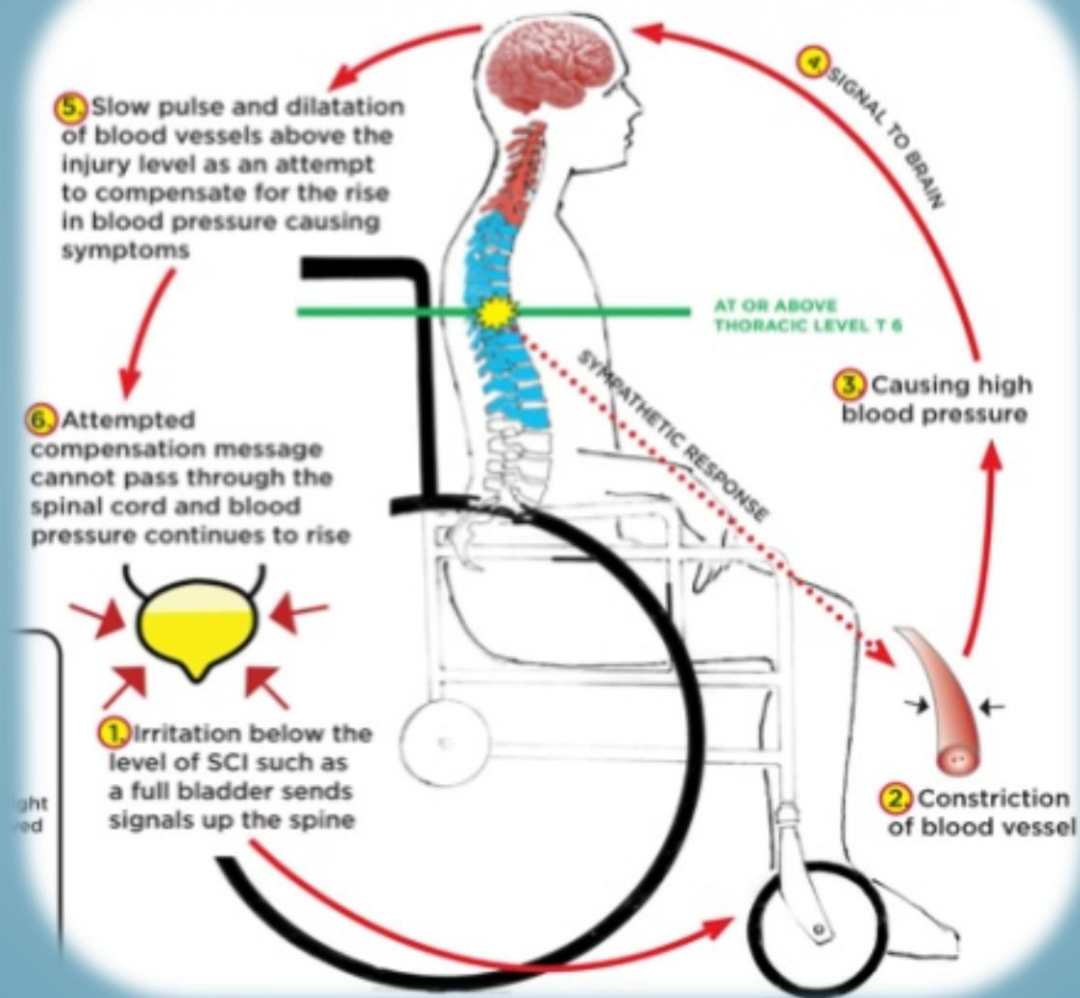


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qGBVp3lpvo>



What is Autonomic Dysreflexia?

HOW DO I GET AUTONOMIC DYSREFLEXIA?



What Are The Signs And Symptoms?

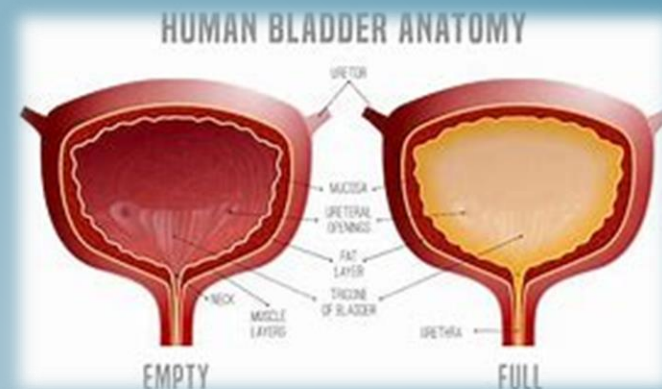
- Pounding headache
- Flushing of the face
- Blotching of the skin
- Blurred vision
- Tight chest
- Sweating- above level of injury
- Pale & goose bumps- below level of injury
- Nasal congestion
- “Sense of impending doom”
- High blood pressure
- Slow heart rate



What Are The Causes?

Bladder

- Check catheter for kinks, blockage, clamps, sitting/lying on tube, full catheter bags.
- Pass an intermittent catheter (if appropriate).
- Test urine for presence of infection.



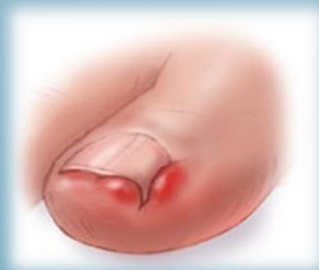
Bowel

- Check bowel and empty if required (may worsen symptoms - may need numbing agent).
- Maintain regular bowel routine to prevent constipation-including taking prescribed laxatives.
- Anal tears/piles (see doctor if concerned).



Skin

- Check skin.
- Ingrown toenail.
- Tight clothing.
- Burns & sunburn.



What Are Other Causes?

- Extremes of temperatures
- Manual evacuation of bowels
- Bladder stones
- Spasms
- Fractures
- Appendicitis
- Child birth

**OR ANY OTHER POSSIBLE CAUSES OF PAIN BELOW YOUR LEVEL
OF INJURY**



**AUTONOMIC DYSREFLEXIA
IS A LIFE THREATENING
EMERGENCY AND MUST BE
TREATED**

IMMEDIATELY



Treatment

- Act quickly.
- Get help- dial 999 if you are unable to control the situation (take medical alert card).
- Sit upright.
- Monitor BP (if equipment available).
- Administer GTN tablets (as prescribed).
- Remove GTN once symptoms relieved.



What Happens After An Episode Of Autonomic Dysreflexia?

- You may have a mild headache after the event, take Paracetamol to help.
- Contact Spinal Injuries Outpatients if you are concerned or would like further advice about managing these situations.

