

Coccydynia Overview - Bombay Spine Clinic

- Coccydynia (Tailbone Pain)

What Is It?

- Coccydynia refers to pain arising from the coccyx, commonly known as the tailbone. The coccyx is the small triangular bone located at the very bottom of the spine and serves as an attachment point for several muscles, ligaments and pelvic floor structures.
- Patients with coccydynia typically experience pain while sitting, especially on hard surfaces. Although often benign, the condition can significantly affect daily activities, travel and work if left untreated.
- Common Symptoms
- Patients may experience:
 - Pain over the tailbone region
 - Pain while sitting, especially on hard surfaces
 - Pain when rising from a sitting position
 - Discomfort during prolonged sitting
 - Localized tenderness over the tailbone
 - Pain during long-distance travel
 - Pain while leaning backward in a chair
 - Occasionally pain during bowel movements
 - Most patients can accurately point to the site of pain with a single finger.

Causes & Risk Factors

- Common causes include:
 - Trauma
 - Fall onto the buttocks
 - Direct injury to the tailbone
 - Sports-related injuries
 - Childbirth
 - Difficult vaginal deliveries may occasionally result in coccygeal injury or instability.
 - Repetitive Microtrauma
 - Long hours of sitting
 - Cycling
 - Repetitive pressure over the tailbone

- Degenerative Changes
- Age-related degeneration of the coccygeal joints may contribute to symptoms.
- Obesity or Rapid Weight Loss
- Both may alter pressure distribution over the coccyx.
- Idiopathic Coccydynia
- In some patients, no specific cause is identified.
- When Should You Seek Medical Advice?
- Medical evaluation is recommended if:
- Tailbone pain persists for more than a few weeks
- Pain interferes with sitting or daily activities

Symptoms are progressively worsening

- Pain follows a significant fall or injury
- Associated swelling develops
- Pain is associated with fever or weight loss
- Persistent symptoms may occasionally indicate infection, fracture or rarely a tumor requiring further evaluation.
- How Is It Diagnosed?
- Clinical Examination

Diagnosis is usually based on a detailed history and physical examination.

- The doctor evaluates:
- Site of tenderness
- Coccygeal mobility
- Associated pelvic or lumbar spine pathology
- X-Ray
- May identify:
- Coccygeal fracture
- Abnormal coccygeal alignment
- Coccygeal instability
- Dynamic sitting and standing X-rays may occasionally be helpful.
- MRI
- MRI may be advised when:

Symptoms persist

- Infection is suspected
- Tumor needs to be ruled out
- Other spinal conditions are considered

- CT Scan
- Occasionally required for detailed assessment of fractures.
- Blood Tests
- May be advised if infection or inflammatory disease is suspected.

Treatment Options

- Non-Surgical Treatment
- Most patients improve without surgery.

Treatment may include:

- Activity modification
- Avoiding prolonged sitting
- Special coccyx cushions (Donut or U-shaped cushions)
- Physiotherapy
- Pelvic floor rehabilitation
- Stretching exercises
- Posture correction
- Medications when required
- Lifestyle modifications often play a significant role in symptom improvement.
- Surgical Treatment
- Surgery is rarely required.
- It may be considered when:

Symptoms persist despite prolonged conservative treatment

- Severe pain significantly affects quality of life
- Structural coccygeal pathology is identified
- Coccygectomy
- In selected cases, removal of the coccyx (Coccygectomy) may be considered.
- This is generally reserved for carefully selected patients after exhaustive non-surgical treatment.

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What is Coccydynia?
- Coccydynia refers to pain arising from the tailbone (coccyx).
- 2. Why does my tailbone hurt when I sit?
- Pressure on an injured or inflamed coccyx often worsens symptoms while sitting.
- 3. Can a fall cause tailbone pain?
- Yes. Direct trauma is one of the most common causes of coccydynia.

- 4. Can childbirth cause Coccydynia?
- Yes. Tailbone injury or strain may occasionally occur during childbirth.
- 5. Is an MRI always necessary?
- No. Most cases can be diagnosed clinically and with X-rays. MRI is usually reserved for persistent or atypical symptoms.
- 6. What type of cushion should I use?
- Special coccyx relief cushions designed to reduce pressure on the tailbone may be helpful.
- 7. Can physiotherapy help?
- Yes. Physiotherapy and posture modification often play an important role in treatment.
- 8. Does every patient need surgery?
- No. Surgery is rarely required.
- 9. How long does recovery take?
- Many patients improve within weeks to months depending on the underlying cause.
- 10. Can tailbone pain be a sign of something serious?
- Most cases are benign, but persistent pain, unexplained weight loss or associated neurological symptoms warrant medical evaluation.
- Related Conditions
- Mechanical Low Back Pain (Lumbago)
- Sacroiliitis
- Osteoporosis
- Spinal Fracture
- Lumbar Canal Stenosis
- When Should You Consult a Spine Specialist?
- If tailbone pain persists despite treatment, interferes with sitting, work or daily activities, or follows a significant injury, consultation with a spine specialist can help identify the underlying cause and guide appropriate treatment.
- Need Expert Advice?
- Book a consultation with Dr. Siddharth Katkade or upload your MRI/report for review through our Patient Resource Centre.

Need Clinical Evaluation or Second Opinion?

This educational document was prepared by **Dr. Siddharth Katkade**. For appointments or to share MRI scan reports for clinical review, call **+91 88507 73095** or consult at Byculla (E) / Khar (W) clinics.