

## Spinal Cord Injury

The vertebrae or spinal column surrounds and protects the spinal cord and nerve roots while providing the major support for the body. Severe trauma can injure the spinal cord, leading to paralysis. Approximately 8,000 new cases of spinal cord injury occur each year in the U.S., the majority of which are 16-30 year old males. The main causes of spinal cord injury include: motor vehicle accidents 35%, violence 30% and falls 20%.

After the initial injury, about half of those affected will remain completely paralyzed below the level of their spinal lesion. In the other half, the lesion is “incomplete” and some movement and/or sensation is preserved. Only 17% of those injured recover enough function to walk again. The higher up the spinal cord lesion, the greater the extent of paralysis and the greater the mortality. Half of the surviving spinal cord injuries are quadriplegic (paralysis of all four limbs) and half are paraplegic (paralysis of both legs). Causes of death in those with spinal cord injury include:

- Pneumonia
- Accidents
- Suicide
- Other infections (skin ulcers, urinary tract, etc.)
- Pulmonary embolus (blood clot to lung)

If your client has a spinal cord injury, please answer the following:

**1. Please list date of injury: :**

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Injury was at what spinal cord level (list specific vertebrae if available, i.e. C7-8):**

cervical spine \_\_\_\_\_

thoracic spine \_\_\_\_\_

lumbrosacral spine \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Please note current level of function:**

incomplete paraplegia

complete paraplegia

incomplete quadriplegia

complete quadriplegia

**4. Is your client on any medications?  
yes, please give details**

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**5. Please check if your client has had any of the following:**  
pneumonia kidney impairment \_\_\_\_\_  
skin ulcers depression \_\_\_\_\_  
urinary tract infection \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Has your client smoked cigarettes or any other tobacco products in the last 5 years?**  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Does your client have any other major health problems (ex: cancer, etc.)?  
yes, please give details**

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