

The fifth lumbar ventral nerve roots contain efferent somatic nerve fibers corresponding to the fifth lumbar spinal cord segment, as well as preganglionic sympathetic fibers from the lateral horn of the fifth lumbar spinal cord segment. They emerge as two or three rows of rootlets from the antero-lateral sulci of the spinal cord. Between adjacent rootlets are inter-radicular spaces, which contain small blood vessels.

The roots pass obliquely infero-laterally as part of the **cauda equina** to their exit through the intervertebral foramina between the pedicles of L5 and S1. They are larger in diameter, obliquity and length than the ventral roots above. They pass over the superior surfaces of the pedicles of S1 to join with the fifth lumbar dorsal roots to form the fifth lumbar spinal nerves. They are covered by a sleeve of pia mater, which is continuous with that of the spinal cord, and loosely invested by a prolongation of dura and arachnoid mater (the dural sleeve) almost as far as the spinal nerves.

Cauda Equina

The cauda equina is formed from the most caudal spinal roots. As the spinal cord terminates before the vertebral column, the lower spinal roots descend inferior to the cord, as a divergent sheath, to reach their corresponding foramina.