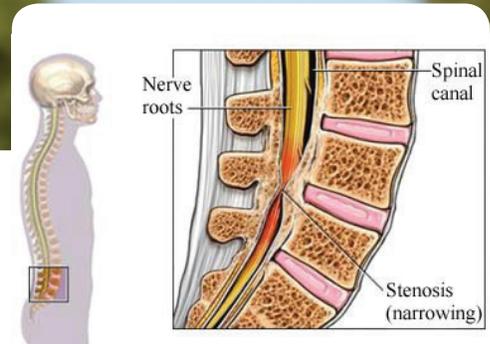




## Back Conditions: SPINAL STENOSIS

*Spinal stenosis* is a narrowing of the spinal canal. The spinal canal is located in the backbone and is a small space that holds the nerve roots and spinal cord. If this space becomes compressed, it can squeeze both the nerves and the spinal cord. This causes pain and other symptoms. Stenosis can occur anywhere along the spinal cord, but is most common in the low back (lumbar) region.



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### Causes

Some people are born with narrowed canals, but most often, stenosis is a result of aging. Conditions that can cause spinal stenosis include:

- Osteoarthritis and osteophytes (bony spurs) associated with aging
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Spinal tumors
- Trauma
- Paget's disease of the bone
- Previous surgery

### Risk Factors

Factors that increase your chance of spinal stenosis include:

- Being born with a narrow spinal canal
- Age: 50 or older
- Previous injury or surgery of the spine

### Symptoms

Symptoms include:

- Numbness, weakness, cramping, or pain in the legs and thighs
- Radiating pain down the leg
- Abnormal bowel and/or bladder function
- Decreased sensation in the feet causing difficulty placing the feet when walking
- Loss of sexual function
- Partial or complete paralysis of legs

## Back Conditions: SPINAL STENOSIS

### Diagnosis

Your doctor will ask about your symptoms and medical history and a physical exam will be done. Images may be taken of your bodily structures. This can be done with:

- Ultrasound
- X-ray
- CT scan
- MRI scan

### Treatment

Your therapist will educate you on pain-relieving techniques, such as ice and decreasing or modifying painful activities. This diagnosis often occurs from muscular tightness or weakness which causes your posture to get out of alignment. Years of activity with poor posture can lead to damage to the structures of the spine. Your therapist will educate you on proper stretching and strengthening exercises for the back. They may perform hands on, manual therapy techniques to further increase your joint flexibility. The final phase of rehab will involve strengthening during functional activities and education to prevent the injury from recurring.

If surgery is needed, your therapist will work with you to regain your strength and range of motion through education, exercise, and manual therapy. They will teach and train you to perform functional activities with proper strength, endurance and education, helping you avoid future injury.

### Prevention

There are no guidelines for preventing spinal stenosis.