

## A Short Note on Spinal Stenosis

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### DESCRIPTION

Spinal stenosis is caused by narrowing of the gaps within the spine that can cause pressure on the nerves that run through it. Spinal stenosis most commonly affects the lower back and neck. Some people with spinal stenosis may not experience any type of symptoms. Some may feel discomfort, tingling, numbness, or muscular weakness. Symptoms might deteriorate with time. Spinal stenosis is most typically caused by osteoarthritic wear-and-tear alterations in the spine.

### Types of spinal stenosis

The forms of spinal stenosis are categorised based on where the problem arises on the spine. It is possible to have many types.

**Cervical stenosis:** The narrowing happens in the region of the spine in neck with this ailment.

**Lumbar stenosis:** The narrowing of the spine in lower back develops in this condition. It is the most prevalent kind of spinal stenosis.

### Symptoms

Many people have MRI or CT scan evidence of spinal stenosis but do not have symptoms. When they do occur, they frequently begin slowly and worsen over time. The symptoms vary depending on where the stenosis is and which nerves are impacted.

Around the neck (cervical spine), Tingling or numbness in a hand, arm, foot, or leg, Hand, arm, foot, or leg weakness, Walking and balance difficulties, Neck ache, In extreme situations, there may be bowel or bladder problems (urinary urgency and incontinence), Lower back pain (lumbar spine), Foot or leg numbness or tingling, Insufficiency in a foot or leg.

### Causes

Some are born with a narrow spinal canal. However, most cases of spinal stenosis arise when something narrows the free area within the spine. Spinal stenosis can be caused by a variety of factors, including:

**Bone overgrowth:** The wear and tear on spinal bones caused by osteoarthritis can result in the creation of bone spurs, which can grow into the spinal canal. Paget's disease, a bone condition that typically affects adults, can also result in bone overgrowth in the spine.

**Herniated disks:** With time, the delicate cushions that function as shock absorbers between vertebrae dry out. Cracks on the outer surface of a disc may enable some of the soft interior material to escape and push on the spinal cord or nerves.

**Thickened ligaments:** The tight fibres that help keep spine's bones together might stiffen and grow over time. These swollen ligaments have the potential to protrude into the spinal canal.

**Tumour:** Abnormal growths can arise inside the spinal cord, the membranes that surround it, or the space between the spinal cord and the vertebrae. These are infrequent and can be seen on spine imaging using an MRI or CT scan.

### Medications

**Analgesics:** Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, and others), naproxen (Aleve, and others), and acetaminophen (Tylenol, and others) may be used to relieve the pain of spinal stenosis. They are usually only suggested for a limited period of time because there is minimal evidence of long-term benefit.

**Antidepressants:** Tricyclic antidepressants, such as amitriptyline, might be used at night to assist relieve chronic pain.

**Anti-seizure medications:** Some seizure medications, such as gabapentin (Neurontin) and pregabalin (Lyrica), are used to alleviate pain caused by injured nerves.

**Opioids:** Codeine-related medicines like oxycodone (Oxycontin, Roxicodone) and hydrocodone (Norco, Vicodin) may be beneficial for short-term pain relief. Opioids should likewise be approached with caution for long-term therapy. However, they entail the danger of major adverse effects, such as becoming habit forming.

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