

# Understanding Bone Spurs



A bone spur is a small, abnormal bone growth. Bone spurs are also called osteophytes. Spurs are not painful. But they can cause pain if they rub on a nerve or other tissue.

## What causes bone spurs?

Bone spurs may happen because of osteoarthritis. Or a ligament or tendon may pull too hard and cause excess bone to grow. Bone spurs may also occur when the body tries to heal itself after an injury.

Bone spurs can form on any bone. But they most often happen on joints where 2 bones come together, or where ligaments or tendons attach to bones. They tend to occur more often in these areas:

- Neck
- Shoulders
- Elbows
- Spine
- Hips
- Knees
- Heels

Older adults are more likely to have bone spurs. Spurs can also happen in young athletes or dancers. This is because of the added stress on their muscles, ligaments, and tendons. Pain may happen while the spur is forming. But the pain may lessen or go away. In some cases, pain may continue. It can get in the way of physical activity.

## Treatment for bone spurs

See your healthcare provider if:

- You find an abnormal growth.
- You have pain associated with the growth.
- You have pain or weakness in a joint.
- You have pain that gets worse after exercise or activity but not during.
- You have a hard time walking because of the pain.

Your healthcare provider may prescribe rest, anti-inflammatory medicines, or physical therapy. These treatments often work well to treat the symptoms of a bone spur.

In rare cases, surgery may be advised. You may need it if the spur and inflammation are:

- Preventing you from walking or normal movement
- Not getting better with other kinds of treatment

© 2000-2027 The StayWell Company, LLC. All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions  
This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your Healthcare professional's instructions. Copyright Krames LLC.