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Spinal Stenosis

Your spine, or backbone, protects your spinal cord and allows you to stand and bend. Spinal stenosis causes narrowing in your spine. The narrowing puts pressure on your nerves and spinal cord and can cause pain.

Spinal stenosis occurs mostly in people older than 50. Younger people with a spine injury or a narrow spinal canal are also at risk. Diseases such as arthritis and scoliosis can cause spinal stenosis, too. Symptoms might appear gradually or not at all.


They include:

- Pain in your neck or back
- Numbness, weakness, cramping, or pain in your arms or legs
- Pain going down the leg
- Foot problems


Doctors diagnose spinal stenosis with a physical exam and imaging tests. Treatments include medications, physical therapy, braces, and surgery.

NIH: National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

Start Here

- **Spinal Stenosis** [<https://rheumatology.org/patients/spinal-stenosis>] (American College of Rheumatology)
Also in Spanish [<https://rheumatology.org/patients/estenosis-espinal>]
- **Spinal Stenosis** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/spinal-stenosis/symptoms-causes/syc-20352961?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/spinal-stenosis/symptoms-causes/syc-20352961?p=1>]
- **Spinal Stenosis** [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/spinal-stenosis>]  (National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/es/informacion-de-salud/estenosis-espinal>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- **Myelography** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/myelography/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/mielografia/>]
- **Spine CT** [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/spinect>] (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/spinect>]
- **Spine MRI** [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/spinemr>] (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/spinemr>]

Treatments and Therapies

- **Back Surgery: When Is It a Good Idea?** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/back-pain/in-depth/back-surgery/art-20048274?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/back-pain/in-depth/back-surgery/art-20048274?p=1>]

Cervical Laminoplasty [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Treatments/Surgical-Options/Cervical-Laminoplasty>]
(North American Spine Society)

- Epidural Injections [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/epidural>]
(American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/epidural>]
- Laminectomy [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/laminectomy/about/pac-20394533?p=1>]
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Related Issues

- Cauda Equina Syndrome [<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/cauda-equina-syndrome>]
(American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons)


Specifics

- Cervical Stenosis, Myelopathy and Radiculopathy [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Conditions/Degenerative-Conditions/Cervical-Stenosis-Myelopathy-and-Radiculopathy>] (North American Spine Society)
- Lumbar Spinal Canal Stenosis [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/lumbar-spinal-canal-stenosis/?adfree=true>]
(American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/estenosis-del-canal-espinal-lumbar-es/?adfree=true>]

Images

- Lumbar spinal surgery - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100119_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100119_1.htm]
- Spinal fusion - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100121_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100121_1.htm]
- Spinal surgery - cervical - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100133_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100133_1.htm]

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Spinal Stenosis [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Spinal+Stenosis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles


References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Prediction of early postoperative complications and transfusion risk after lumbar spinal... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40722012>]
- Article: Percutaneous unilateral biportal endoscopy versus uniportal endoscopy for lumbar spinal stenosis:... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40713043>]
- Article: Comparison of short-term clinical outcomes and muscle injury in patients with... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40691813>]
- Spinal Stenosis -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Spinal+Stenosis%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Reference Desk

- Anatomy of the Spine [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Resources/Anatomy-Spine>] (North American Spine Society)
- Definitions [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Resources/Definitions>] (North American Spine Society)

Find an Expert

- Arthritis Foundation: Local Office Directory [<https://www.arthritis.org/local-offices/>] (Arthritis Foundation)
- Find a Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Physician [https://members.aapmr.org/AAPMR/AAPMR_FINDER.aspx] (American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation)
- Find a Physical Therapist Near You [<https://www.choosept.com/find-a-pt>] (American Physical Therapy Association)
- Find a Rheumatologist [<https://my.rheumatology.org/rheumatology-provider-directory>] (American College of Rheumatology)
- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/>] 
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/es/portal-en-espanol>]

Patient Handouts

- Foraminotomy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007390.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007390.htm>]
- Laminectomy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007389.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007389.htm>]
- Questions to ask your surgeon about spinal surgery [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000971.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000971.htm>]
- Spinal fusion [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002968.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002968.htm>]
- Spinal stenosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000441.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000441.htm>]
- Spine surgery - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000313.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000313.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Foraminotomy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007390.htm>]
- Laminectomy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007389.htm>]
- Lumbar MRI scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007352.htm>]
- Lumbar spinal surgery - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100119_1.htm]
- Lumbar Spine CT scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007350.htm>]
- Questions to ask your surgeon about spinal surgery [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000971.htm>]
- Spinal fusion [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002968.htm>]

Spinal fusion - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100121_1.htm]

Spinal stenosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000441.htm>]

Spinal surgery - cervical - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100133_1.htm]

Spine surgery - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000313.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Back Pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/backpain.html>]

Spine Injuries and Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/spineinjuriesanddisorders.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Spinal Stenosis* is the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases [<http://www.niams.nih.gov/>]

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