

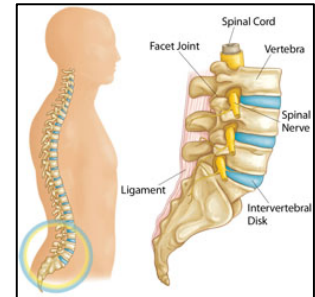


SPINAL STENOSIS



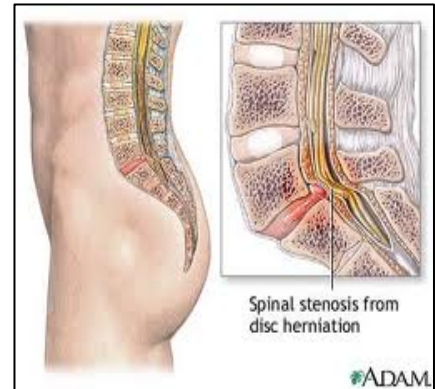
What is spinal stenosis?

Spinal stenosis is narrowing of the canal that protects the spinal cord. This causes pressure on the spinal cord and narrowing of the openings where spinal nerves leave the canal. These nerves normally allow muscles to contract and also communicate different types of sensation to the brain.



Where does it occur?

Spinal stenosis occurs in the low back but can occur in the neck. As the disks that cushion the bones of the spine become drier with age they start to bulge into the canal. At the same time, the bones and ligaments of the spine thicken or grow larger due to arthritis or long-term swelling. This narrowing on the nerves leads to the signs and symptoms described below.



What are the signs and symptoms?

- Low back pain or pain possibly into one or both legs below the knee
- Numbness, tingling, cramping, or weakness into buttocks or legs
- Worse with backwards bending and in standing
- Better with sitting, laying down, and with slouched posture
- Poor balance
- Walking uphill is easier than downhill

How does physical therapy help?

- Strengthening and stretching- Flexion-based
- Manual therapy – mobilization, massage
- Safe and proper transfers and walking techniques
- Posture, ergonomics, and body mechanics
- Pacing techniques and activity modification
- Lumbar traction
- Modalities – electrical stimulation, ultrasound, cold laser

