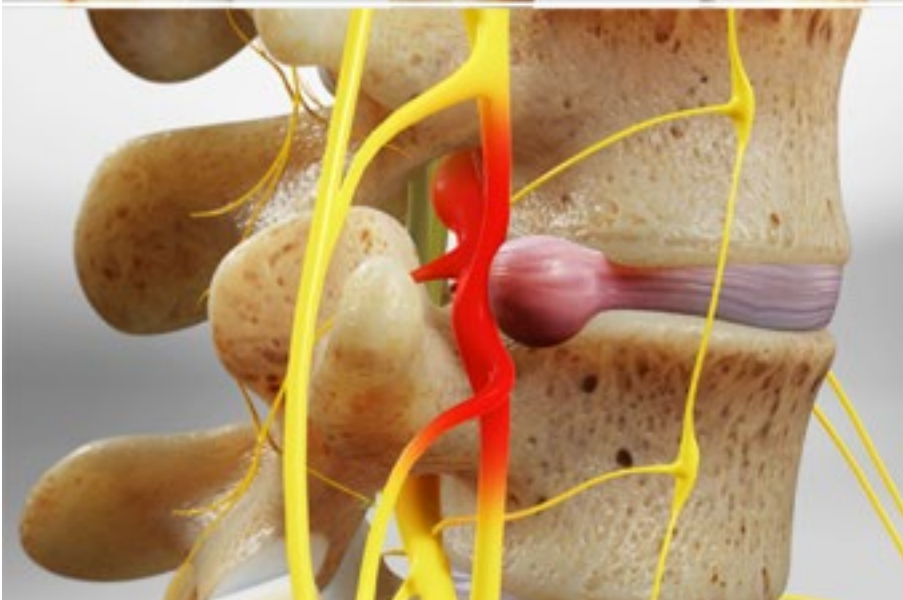


Spinal Stenosis



Overview

Your spinal nerves travel through your spinal canal and exit through openings we call "foramen." If any of these spaces are too narrow, your nerves become compressed. We say you have "spinal stenosis." It's a problem that most often happens in the neck and lower back.

Causes

What causes spinal stenosis? Some people are born with a small spinal canal. But for others, something happens to cause the narrowing. It can be linked to the bone spurs of osteoarthritis. It can be caused by a gradual thickening of ligaments in the spine. It can be caused by a herniated disc or some other injury. And, it can be caused by a tumor.

Symptoms

Symptoms depend on what nerves are affected. You may have neck or back pain. You may have sensations like numbness, weakness and tingling. You may feel these in a hand, arm, leg or foot. You may have trouble with balance. Some people develop bowel or bladder problems. Symptoms may start gradually, and get worse over time.

Treatment

Treatment depends on your needs. If your stenosis is mild, things like medications, injections and physical therapy may give you relief. If those don't help, you may need surgery. Your doctor will create a care plan that's right for you.