

## **Spinal Stenosis Treatment Options**

While the term "stenosis" comes from Greek and means "choking," spinal stenosis, however, has little in common with choking. So what is spinal stenosis?

There are two types of spinal stenosis: lumbar stenosis and cervical stenosis. While lumbar spinal stenosis is more common, cervical spinal stenosis is often more dangerous because it involves compression of the spinal cord, as explained below in more detail.

### **Lumbar Spinal Stenosis vs. Cervical Spinal Stenosis**

- In lumbar stenosis, the spinal nerve roots in the lower back are compressed, or choked, and this can produce symptoms of sciatica -- tingling, weakness or numbness that radiates from the low back and into the buttocks and legs - especially with activity.

### **See Lumbar Spinal Stenosis: A Definitive Guide**

- Spinal stenosis pain in the neck (cervical spinal stenosis) can be far more dangerous by compressing the spinal cord. Spinal cord stenosis may lead to serious symptoms, including major body weakness or even paralysis. Such severe spinal stenosis symptoms are virtually impossible in the lumbar spine, however, as the spinal cord is not present in the lumbar spine.

### **See Cervical Stenosis with Myelopathy**

- In rare cases, lumbar stenosis can go no further than to produce severe persistent disabling pain and even weakness in the legs. Most cases of stenosis in the lumbar spine, however, have pain that radiates into the leg(s) with walking, and that pain will be relieved with sitting. This is called claudication, which can also be caused by circulatory problems to the legs, as discussed later in this article.

### **Spinal Stenosis Pain in Older Patients**

- Spinal stenosis is related to degeneration in the spine and usually will become significant in the 5th decade of life and extend throughout every subsequent age group. Most patients first visit their doctor with symptoms of spinal stenosis at about age 60 or so. Patients need only seek treatment for lumbar spinal stenosis if they no longer wish to live with significant activity limitations, such as leg pain and/or difficulty with walking.

- Spinal stenosis can occur in a variety of ways in the spine. Approximately 75% of cases of spinal stenosis occur in the lumbar spine (low back), which is called lumbar spinal stenosis, and most will affect the sciatic nerve which runs along the back of the leg. When this happens, it is commonly called sciatica.

Disclaimer: This information is not intended as a substitute for medical or chiropractic professional help or advice, but is to be used only as an aide in understanding spinal and nerve issues.

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