

Spinal Stenosis - What You Should Know About



The spine is not only the backbone of our body but it also helps perform various functions in our body. Our spine encloses various nerves and the spinal cord that helps transfer signals from various parts of the body to the brain. That's how we perceive pain and other sensations.

Spinal problems are painful and troublesome, and if timely care and treatment are not provided, the condition could become worse. In severe cases, spinal surgeries are required, and in such situations, spinal implants are also required.

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In this post, our topic of discussion will revolve around spinal stenosis, a condition that affects the spine. Let us talk about it in detail.

Spinal Stenosis – An Overview

Spinal stenosis is the condition in which the spaces within the spine become narrow. This causes compression of the nerves and the spinal cord. When such a situation occurs, several complications may occur and that may include weakness in the legs, hands, or arms, numbness, or tingling. This may also cause back pain and sciatica.

One of the facts about the condition is that it does not occur suddenly rather, it develops slowly. Let us talk about the symptoms associated with the condition.

Types of Spinal Stenosis

Any part of the spine can get affected by spinal stenosis but, the cervical region and the lumbar spine get affected the most.

Cervical Spinal Stenosis

When the space within the neck region of the spine becomes narrow, the condition is known as cervical spinal stenosis.

Lumbar Spinal Stenosis

Being the commonest form of spinal stenosis, Lumbar spinal stenosis is the condition in which the lower back region of the spine becomes narrow.

Symptoms of Spinal Stenosis

The symptoms of the condition may vary according to the type of spinal stenosis and its severity.

Cervical Spinal Stenosis

Difficulty in maintaining balance and walking

Numbness in the arms, legs, hands, or foot

Weakness in arms, hands, legs, and foot

Bowel and bladder dysfunction

Pain in the neck

Lumbar Spinal Stenosis

Lower back pain

Pain in one or both the legs, especially while standing for long hours

Weakness in the legs along with numbness or tingling

Causes of Spinal Stenosis

It is noticed that some people are born with a small spinal canal, and as they grow, complications start to occur. While on the other hand, the causes of the condition may include:

Overgrowth of the bone in the spine (bone spurs)

Herniated disc

Thickening of ligaments

Spinal tumors

Spinal injuries

Diagnosis of Spinal Stenosis

Diagnosis of the condition often starts with a physical examination and the healthcare service provider asks about the symptoms experienced by the patient. Besides this, medical history check is also an important factor that helps in the correct diagnosis. For the confirmation, certain imaging tests are required:

X-rays

CT scan or CT myelogram

MRI

Treatment of Spinal Stenosis

The treatment of spinal stenosis is based on the severity of the condition along with the location. Non-surgical treatment is often preferred in mild and moderate cases of the condition. It includes:

Pain-relieving medications

Opioids

Anti-seizure drugs

Antidepressants

Physical therapy

Steroid injections

Severe cases of the condition require decompression surgery and that increases the space in the spinal canal.

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