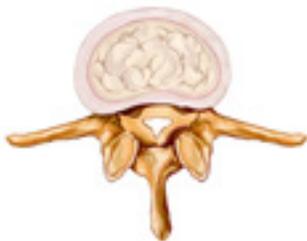
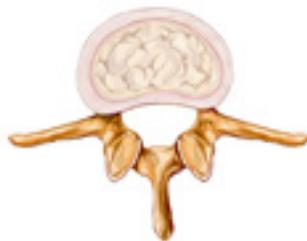


## LUMBAR SPINAL STENOSIS

**DESCRIPTION:** As we age, degenerative changes of the spine can result in a narrowing of the spinal canal and lateral foramen. As the lumbar disc becomes dehydrated and shrinks, abnormal stress is transferred to the facet joints, which accelerates the arthritic process. The result is a collapse or compression of the vertebral column. When the nerve is compressed, it is called spinal stenosis.



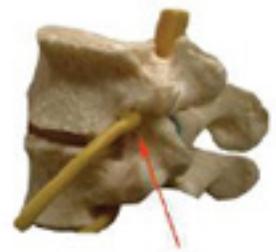
**STENOSIS**



**NORMAL**



**NORMAL FORAMINAL SPACE**



**FORAMINAL STENOSIS & DISC DEGENERATION**

**SYMPTOMS:** People with stenosis often complain of back pain or achiness, but the hallmark is pain, numbness or tingling in one or both of the legs with walking or standing. In severe cases, muscle weakness may exist as the signal that the nerve is interrupted. Sitting or bending forward often gives relief and many who suffer with stenosis note that walking with a shopping cart or walker is helpful.

Spinal stenosis most often occurs in adults over 60 years old, but people may become symptomatic as early as 30 years old. It is equally prevalent in men and women.



**TREATMENT:** Physical Therapy attempts to reduce the nerve irritation by improving the flexibility and strength of the lower back, abdominals and hip muscles. Aquatic Therapy has been shown to be very effective in pain relief as the buoyancy of your spine in the water reduces the compressive forces of gravity and helps alleviate the nerve compression. Daily Exercises (especially the pelvic tilt and hip flexor stretches) and maintaining general conditioning results in a decrease of pain over a 6-8 week period. However, severe cases may require epidural steroid injections. Less frequently, surgical intervention is required to alleviate the pressure on the spinal nerves.

**IF YOU DEVELOP THE FOLLOWING SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION:** worsening of balance, tripping or falling while walking; changes in your bowel or bladder function; new or worsening numbness or tingling in your legs or groin region; or sudden weakness in your legs as these may be signs of a more significant neural compromise.