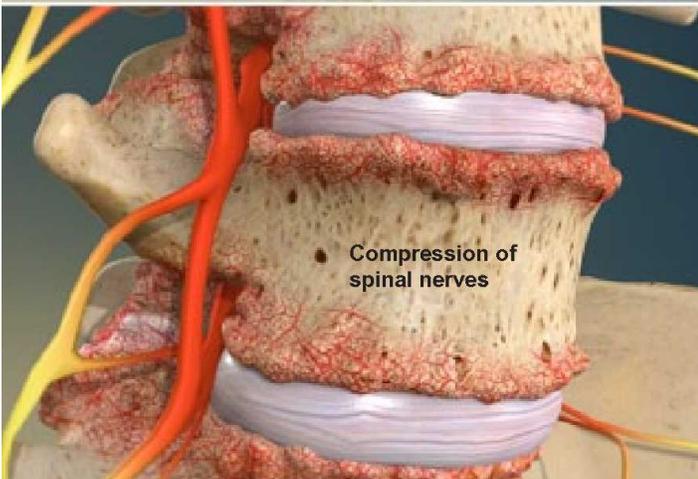
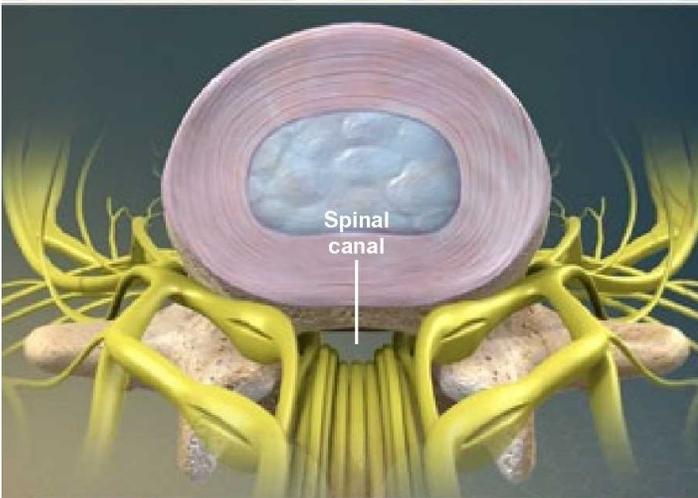
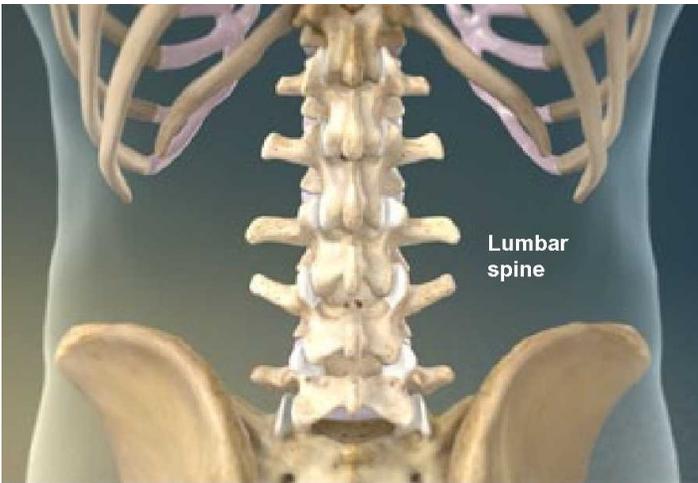


Low Back Pain (Lumbar Spine)

Overview

Lower back pain is a common problem that impacts quality of life. It can vary in frequency and intensity. There are many different causes of low back pain.



About the Lumbar Spine

Your lumbar spine is your lower back. There are five lumbar vertebrae, with spinal discs in between. These discs cushion the bones, absorb shock, and allow spinal movement such as bending and twisting.

Spinal Nerves

The spine protects spinal nerves that extend down from your brain through a space called the spinal canal. Branches of nerves leave the canal through exit points along both sides of the spine.

Common Causes of Pain

Low back pain can be caused by muscle or ligament strains following heavy lifting or strenuous work. Traumatic injuries such as falls, or car crashes can also cause back pain. Disc herniations, vertebral fractures, or spinal stenosis may reduce the exit point space in the spinal canal and compress spinal nerves.

Symptoms

The types, intensity, frequency, and location of low back symptoms vary. You may feel burning, stabbing, tingling, numbness, or weakness. Low back pain symptoms can be severe, mild, or some level in between. You may feel symptoms constantly, intermittently, or only during certain activities. Your symptoms may remain just in the lower back (discogenic pain or muscle/ligament strain) or can travel down from your back (radiculopathy) when caused by a compressed spinal nerve.

Treatment

Because the symptoms vary widely, the treatment options for low back pain vary as well. Over-the-counter medications, ointments, ice, heat, and rest may relieve your symptoms. You may need active treatments from a chiropractor or physical therapist. Prescription medications may be required, either in pill form or through injections. Surgery is another treatment option for more severe conditions.