Spinal Stenosis

What is Spinal Stenosis?
Narrowing of the spaces within your spine leading to pressure on the spinal cord or other nerves

Where does it occur?
Mostly in the neck or low back

Does it hurt?
Not Always!

3 Main Causes

- Normal Aging & Wear and Tear
- Osteoarthritis
- Spinal Injuries or Diseases of the Bone & Tissues

Symptoms

- Pain, numbness, and tingling down the arms or legs that increases with standing or walking
- Complaints decrease with sitting or folding forward
- Occasional problems with bowel or bladder function
- Weakness in the arms or legs
- Chronic Low Back Pain

3 Treatment Options

1) Physical Therapy
2) Lifestyle Changes
3) Steroid Injections or Surgical Options
Pain Relief Through:

**Stretching and Flexibility** – Exercises that help with mobility in your joints and muscles of your spine

**Strengthening** – Exercises to increase control of trunk to provide support for your spine. Arms & Legs strength takes load off the spinal joints.

**Aerobic Fitness** – To increase endurance and ability to tolerate all of the exercises above

**Physical Therapy Tools** – Electrical Stimulation, Ice, Education

---

**Lifestyle Changes**

- Exercise at least 150 minutes per week
- Maintain a Healthy Body Weight
- Use Supportive Chairs and Mattresses
- Avoid Heavy Lifting
- Be Aware of Proper Posture During Daily Activities

---

**Steroid Injections** – Provide short-term symptom relief but does not eliminate the problem

**Spinal Decompression** - Removal of a part of the bone of the spine to increase space for the spinal cord or nerves. Must be followed up with an exercise program

**Spinal Fusion** – Boney fusion created to stop motion in parts of the spine causing pain. Does not stop the aging process of the bone.

For other options, contact your primary care doctor

---

Author: Meghan M Bowman, SPT Medical University of South Carolina

---

References:


