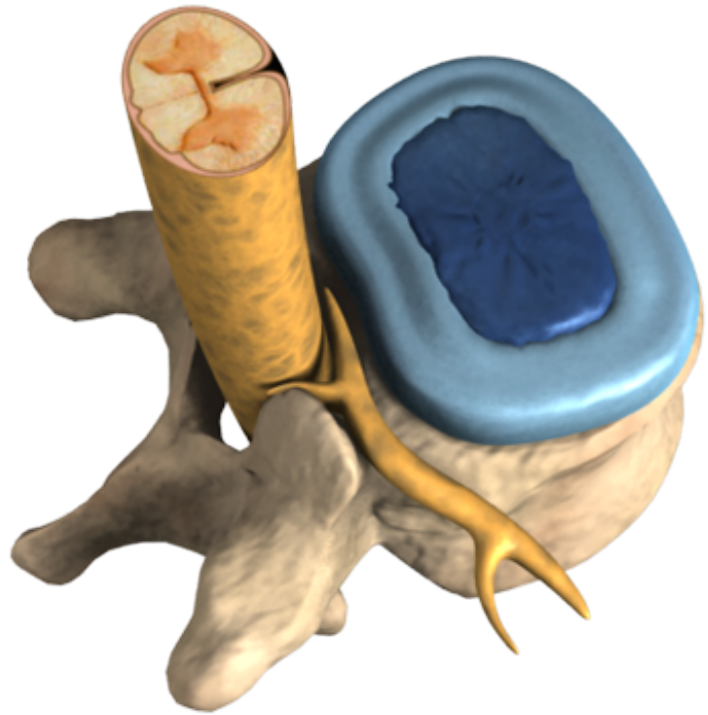


Spondylolisthesis

Spondylolisthesis is a condition that occurs when one spinal vertebral body slips forward relative to another. It can occur anywhere along the spine, but typically occurs in the lumbar region. Spondylolisthesis is less common among young children, occurring primarily in adolescents and adults.





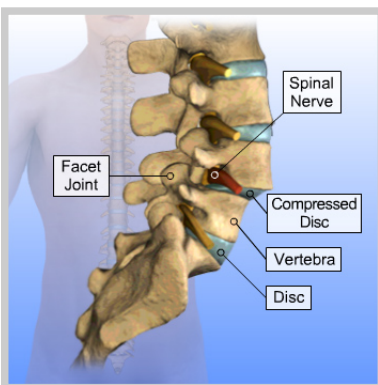
Introduction

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Symptoms

Symptoms resulting from spondylolisthesis vary. Some people have no pain or other symptoms. In extreme cases, the deformity may be a visible increase in the curvature of the spine in the lumbar region, which can affect movement. Often there is mild to moderate low back pain, particularly after exercising. If the forward slippage compresses a nerve, leg pain often develops.



Causes

Spondylolisthesis can be caused in several ways. The majority of cases occur in the elderly when the joints that allow the spine to bend forward (facet joints) wear with age and allow one vertebra to slip over another. In other cases, subjecting the spine to a sudden or repeated force may cause spondylolisthesis. Adolescent athletes that perform repetitive hyperextension, such as gymnasts, may be at increased risk for spondylolisthesis.



Summary

Spondylolisthesis may or may not require treatment depending on whether symptoms include pain or disability. Non surgical treatments may include modifying activities to reduce stress on the spine, physical therapy, medications or injections to reduce pain and inflammation, or wearing a brace. In severe cases or those that are progressively worsening, surgery may be performed to correct the condition.