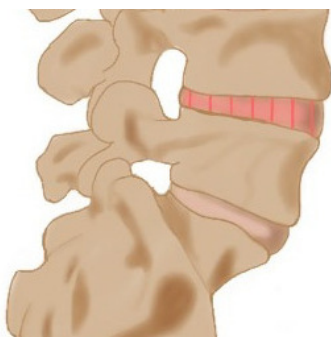


SPONDYLOLISTHESIS

Normal



Overview

The spine is made up of individual bones called vertebrae, which are separated by rubbery cushions called discs. Each vertebra is composed of a vertebral body at the front and two facet joints, one on each side, at the rear. The facet joints link the stacked vertebrae together forming a tunnel called the spinal canal. The spinal cord is the nerve center of the body and passes through this wide opening, exiting through small openings in the canal called foramen.

Spondylolisthesis (Spondy)

Spondylolisthesis, abbreviated as Spondy, is when a vertebra slips out of alignment. Discs and joints can slip in relation to each other causing misalignment of the spinal canal. The degree of severity is determined by measuring how much of a vertebra has slipped forward, from grade 1 being least advanced to grade 5 being most advanced. Grade 1 spondylolisthesis indicates a 1-25% slip, and generally does not require surgical treatment.

Causes

Spondylolisthesis can be caused by trauma, such as a motor vehicle accident or fall, but also can be age-related. Osteoarthritis of the facet joints can lead to spondylolisthesis, most commonly at L4-5 level which has the greatest flexion-extension movement.

Symptoms

The symptoms of spondylolisthesis are most commonly low back pain. If there is severe nerve compression, other symptoms can include numbness, tingling and weakness, particularly with activities, in the legs and feet. As the body tries to capture the unstable segment, the facet joints enlarge and place pressure on the nerve root causing lumbar stenosis.

Grade 1



Grade 2



Grade 3



Grade 4

