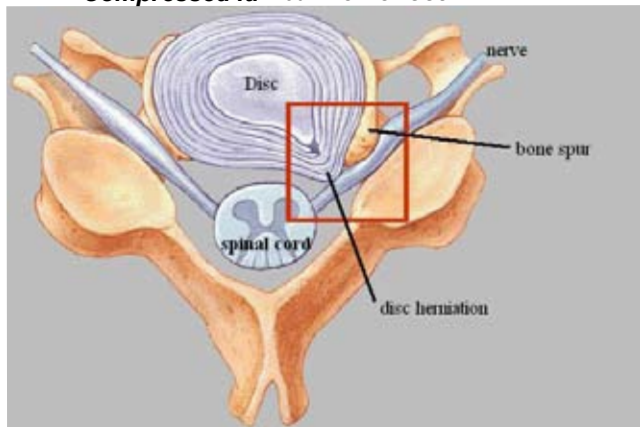




Lumbar Radiculopathy [“pinched nerve” in the back] and Lumbar Spinal Stenosis [narrowing of the canal in the back]

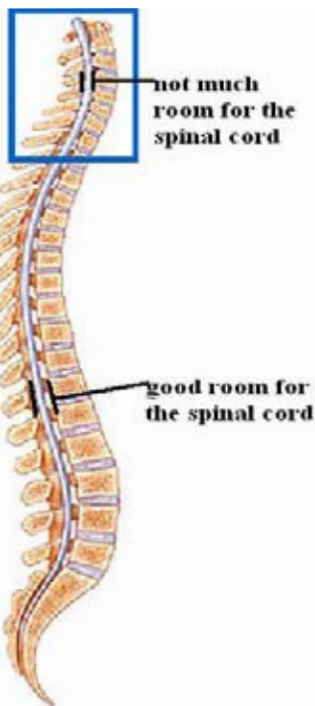
Compressed lumbar nerve root



Degeneration of the **lumbar spine (back)** can result in several different conditions that cause problems. These are usually divided between problems that come from mechanical problems in the back, and problems which come from nerves being irritated or pinched. A **lumbar radiculopathy** is a problem that results when a nerve in the back is irritated as it leaves the spinal canal. This condition usually occurs when a **herniated disc** or a **bone spur** is pinching a nerve root.

Symptoms: Weakness, pain, numbness and tingling sensations in the back and leg and loss of reflexes may all occur. These symptoms may worsen when the back is in different positions such as bending forward or backward.

Diagnosis: It may be diagnosed by imaging, such as an MRI or CT. Testing such as EMG/NCS may also be performed to examine the 'electrical system' of the body and determine the severity of nerve compression. Treatment may consist of physical therapy, injections, medications, and surgery.



Lumbar spinal stenosis (narrowing of the spinal canal) can cause compression of the spinal nerves, which can prevent the nerve roots from conducting effectively, especially when walking. When this happens, there can be a significant amount of pain, numbness, and/or weakness in the buttocks, thighs, and legs. Often, this can severely limit or altogether stop the patient from walking. The discomfort usually disappears after 5 -10 minutes of rest. Lying with the legs flexed, sitting, or squatting can also help as these maneuvers increase the area of the spinal canal. These symptoms may begin in the lower legs and progress upwards toward the buttocks or they may begin in the buttocks and progress downward. This condition tends to occur more frequently in men than women and is usually seen after age 50. Most people will gradually decrease the walking distance until they reach a comfort zone. Typically, patients are able to walk at least 100 meters. Unfortunately, this condition is lifelong and can be progressive. Sometimes physical therapy, medication and other non-surgical measures such as injections can provide adequate symptomatic relief. If your symptoms continue to progress or become too painful, surgery to widen the spinal canal may be your best option (surgical decompression).