

Retrolisthesis

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Situation: Retrolisthesis refers to damage to the ligaments of the spine that cause a vertebrae to displace—or *shift*—backwards in relationship to the vertebrae above or below it. This condition is most commonly seen in the lower back and looks like stair steps on an X-ray. A retrolisthesis can often produce back pain and other neurological discomforts such as tingling or pain to buttocks, thighs, legs and feet. Often, the intervertebral disc is stretched and can contribute additional pain or other neurologic symptoms. A retrolisthesis is often misidentified by a radiologist or chiropractor as a subluxation.

Causes: Retrolisthesis is often caused by repetitive trauma, an acute trauma such as a slip and fall, or a degenerative condition of the spine.

Symptoms: Symptoms of retrolisthesis can start with severe pain in the back, muscle spasms, and tingling or numbness in your arms or legs. You may also experience loss of strength and chronic stiffness.

Treatment: Treatments options for retrolisthesis can include chiropractic care, acupuncture, physical therapy, and massage therapy. The chiropractor will help determine what type of treatments and modalities are appropriate for you. Upon examination, the doctor may order special testing such as X-rays.