

Spondylolisthesis

Spondylolisthesis

Situation: *Spondylolisthesis* occurs when damage to the joints of the spine cause the vertebrae to slide forward one on top of the other. This creates pressure and distortion of the spinal cord and may also compress the nerves at the damaged level of the spine. Described as a medical subluxation of the vertebrae of the spine, this condition is most commonly seen in the lower back. Two types of spondylolisthesis are degenerative and *isthmic* . . which refers to a fracture in a small piece of bone called the *pars interarticularis*.

Causes: *Degenerative spondylolisthesis* is a progression of degenerative joint disease causing weakening and slippage forward of one vertebrae on another. The spinal cord and nerves may become pinched causing severe neurological symptoms to the extremities.

Isthmic spondylolisthesis occurs when a vertebrae fractures allowing it to slide forward, pinching the spinal cord and spinal nerves. This condition can begin in childhood with the effects not felt until adulthood . . . or it can happen suddenly as the result of sports activities, work, diet, weight, genetics, or trauma.

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

Treatment: Treatments options 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 an MRI. In unresponsive cases a surgical consult may be recommended.