Spondylosis

Spondylosis (spon-di-LOH-sis) is a condition where the breakdown of the disc between bones in your spine called vertebrae leads to bone on bone contact. It may be diagnosed around age 40 to 50, and happens as a result of normal wear and tear. It occurs more often in men.

Your body may try to heal this bone on bone contact by growing extra bone on the edges of the vertebrae. This extra bone is called a bone spur. Multiple bone spurs can occur on the spine due to the increased stress on the bone. These changes to the discs and bones of the spine can put pressure on the nerves and the spinal cord. This is arthritis of the spine. Any bones of the spine can be affected, but it is more common in the lower back and neck. It may be seen on an x-ray of the back, but you may not have any signs.

- **Cervical spondylosis** happens in the bones of the neck.
- **Lumbar spondylosis** happens in the bones of the lower back.
**Signs of spondylosis**

Common signs may include:

- Pain
- Numbness and tingling or other sensation changes
- Muscle weakness
- Changes or loss of bowel or bladder function

If there is pressure on the spinal cord, it can cause problems with walking, loss of balance, and loss or change in bowel or bladder control.

**Vertebrae slip**

Sometimes the breakdown of one vertebra can cause another to shift or slip called *spondylolisthesis* (spon-dee-low-lis-thee-sis). This most often happens in the bones of the lower back. Vertebrae slip can cause low back pain, and sometimes shooting pain down the back of the leg. Sitting and trying to stand up can be painful. Coughing or sneezing can also make the pain worse. Some people say they feel a “slipping” when they go from sitting to standing.

Talk with your doctor about the tests or treatments that can help you to manage this condition.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.