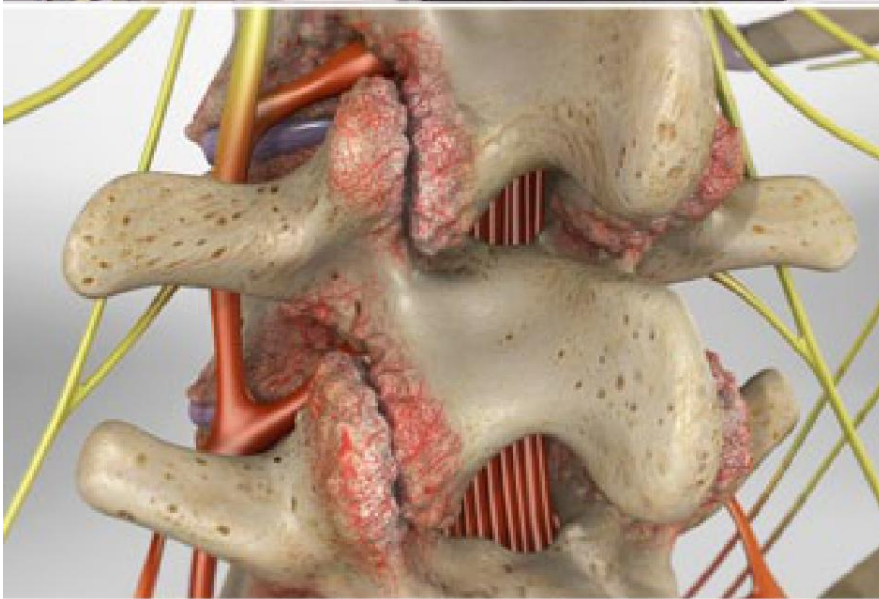




Osteoarthritis of the Spine



Overview

If you have back or neck pain that doesn't go away, you may have osteoarthritis of the spine. Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. For many of us, it develops slowly as we age. And it can keep you from being as active as you like.

Causes

Osteoarthritis doesn't have a specific cause. The normal wear and tear of aging can bring it on. So your risk is higher as you get older. It's also higher if you have a family history of the condition. Osteoarthritis is more likely to develop if you are overweight, or if you've ever injured your spine.

Symptoms

With osteoarthritis, the discs in your spine may get thinner, and joint cartilage at the rear of your spine may wear away. Bone rubs against bone, creating bone spurs. Your nerves may become pinched. You feel pain and stiffness, usually in your neck or lower back. You may lose some of your range of motion. Your symptoms may be worse in the morning, after you sit or rest, and on rainy days. And symptoms flare up when you're active.

Treatment

Treatment options include medications, physical therapy and limiting activities that cause pain. If these aren't helpful, you may need surgery. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.