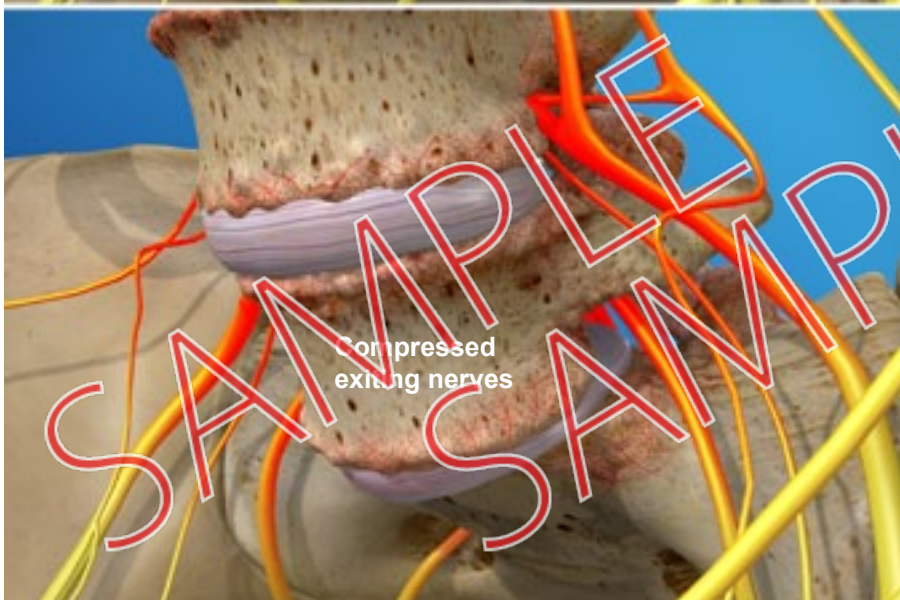
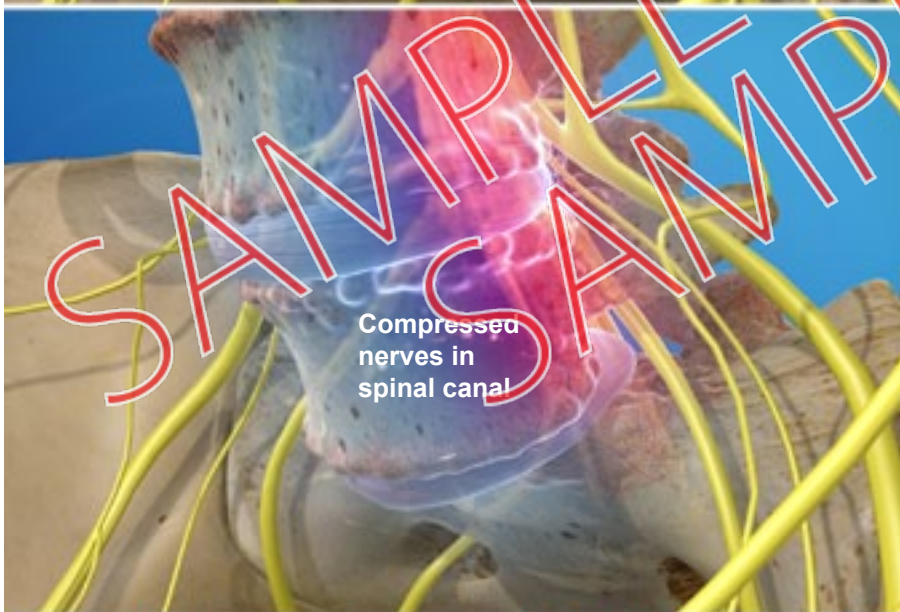


Spondylolisthesis



Overview

This condition occurs when a lumbar vertebra slips out of place. It slides forward, distorting the shape of your spine. This may compress the nerves in the spinal canal. The nerves that exit the foramen (open spaces on the sides of your vertebrae) may also be compressed. These compressed nerves can cause pain and other problems.

Common Causes

Spondylolisthesis has a variety of causes. In children, it is often due to a birth defect in that area of the spine. Some people develop this condition because of an overuse injury called "spondylolysis." This is a stress fracture of the vertebral bone. In adults, arthritis and the loss of disc elasticity that results from aging are the most common causes of spondylolisthesis.

Other Causes

Less commonly, spondylolisthesis can result from a sudden injury that leads to a broken vertebra. Diseases or tumors that weaken the spine can also result in spondylolisthesis.

Symptoms

Symptoms vary from person to person. Many people who have this condition have no symptoms at all. If you do have symptoms, you may experience pain in your lower back. You may have hamstring spasms. Pain may spread down your leg to your foot. You may also have foot numbness and tingling.

Treatment

Treatment options depend on the severity of your condition. You may benefit from rest. Medications may relieve your pain. A back brace may also help. And, you may benefit from physical therapy. If those methods are not successful, you may benefit from a surgical procedure to reduce nerve compression or to stabilize your spine.