AN INTRODUCTION TO

LUMBAR SPINAL STENOSIS

This booklet is designed to inform you about lumbar spinal stenosis. It is not meant to replace any personal conversations that you might wish to have with your physician or other member of your healthcare team.

Not all the information here will apply to your individual treatment or its outcome. The information is intended to answer some of your questions and serve as a stimulus for you to ask appropriate questions about spinal alignment and spine surgery.
The human spine is comprised of the cervical (neck) spine, the thoracic (chest) spine, the lumbar (lower back) spine, and sacral bones. The entire spine is made up of 24 bones, called vertebrae.

These vertebrae are connected by several joints, which allow you to bend, twist, and carry loads. The main joint between two vertebrae is called an intervertebral disc. The disc is comprised of two parts, a tough and fibrous outer layer (annulus fibrosis) and a soft, gelatinous center (nucleus pulposus). These two parts work in conjunction to allow the spine to move, and also provide shock absorption.
What is lumbar spinal stenosis

Lumbar spinal stenosis is a condition defined as the narrowing of the bone canal (vertebral foramen) where the spinal nerves and spinal cord pass through the spine. When this narrowing occurs, the spinal nerves and cord are compressed adding pressure which may cause pain and/or nerve damage.

Advanced degenerative disc disease (DDD) may cause lumbar spinal stenosis. Lumbar spinal stenosis may also be caused by other factors such as birth defects (congenital abnormalities).
Lumbar DDD is defined simply as the wear and tear of intervertebral discs. This wear and tear may result from normal aging or may be due to longstanding trauma. DDD typically begins with a decrease in the water content of the nucelus pulposus and tears in the annulus fibrosus, and can lead to a gradual narrowing of the vertebral foramen. A progression of DDD may result in lumbar spinal stenosis as well as other conditions (e.g., spondylolisthesis and scoliosis).

What are the Symptoms?
Symptoms of lumbar spinal stenosis may include:

- Decreased endurance during physical exercise and activities
- Weakness and/or loss of balance
- Numbness and a “prickly” feeling in your legs, calves, or buttocks
- Aching, dull back pain radiating (spreading) to your legs
- Symptoms improve when you sit, lean forward, lie on your back, or sit with your feet raised

If you feel that you are experiencing any of these symptoms you should see a physician for an accurate diagnosis.
What are the Treatment Options?
If lumbar spinal stenosis is established as your diagnosis, your doctor may recommend one or more of the following treatment plans based on your specific condition:

- Physical therapy and strengthening exercises
- Rest and a restriction of physical activity
- Injections (corticosteroids) to help reduce the pain and swelling
- Medications and analgesics to reduce pain and swelling (typical medications include non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs)

Surgical Solutions
If your symptoms do not improve with other methods, your physician may suggest spinal surgery. Surgical solutions for lumbar DDD with resultant lumbar spinal stenosis may include the following:

- Decompression surgery, such as laminectomy
- Decompression with fusion surgery
- Anterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion (ALIF)
- Posterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion (PLIF)
- NuVasive® MAS® PLIF
- Transforaminal Lumbar Interbody Fusion (TLIF)
- NuVasive MAS TLIF
- NuVasive XLIF® eXtreme Lateral Interbody Fusion
If you have any questions about lumbar spinal stenosis or spine surgery in general, please call or see your physician, who is the only one qualified to diagnose and treat your spinal condition. This patient information brochure is not a replacement for professional medical advice.

RESOURCES

For more information about lumbar spinal stenosis please visit: www.nuvasive.com

If you would like to learn more about patient support and education for chronic back and leg pain sufferers and their loved ones, please visit: www.thebetterwayback.org
AN INTRODUCTION TO

LUMBAR SPINAL STENOSIS