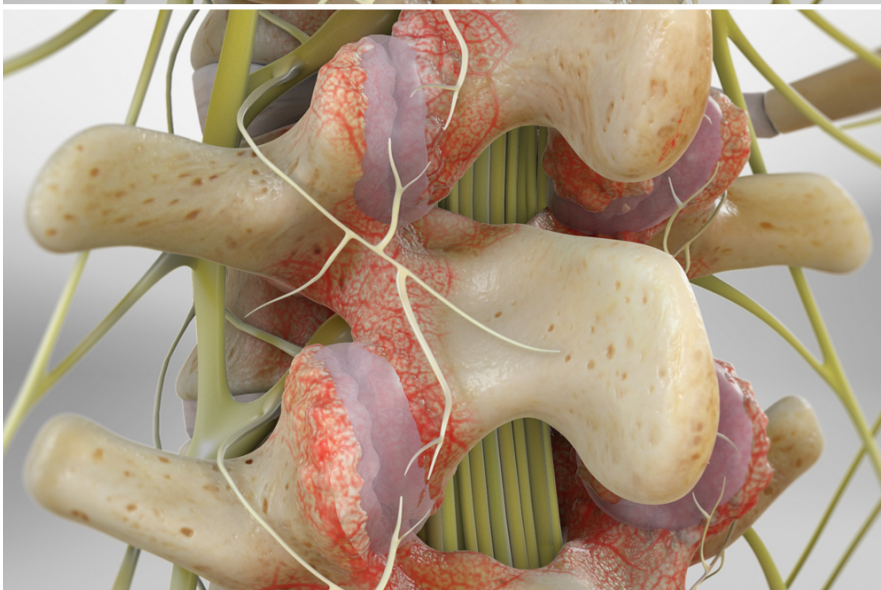
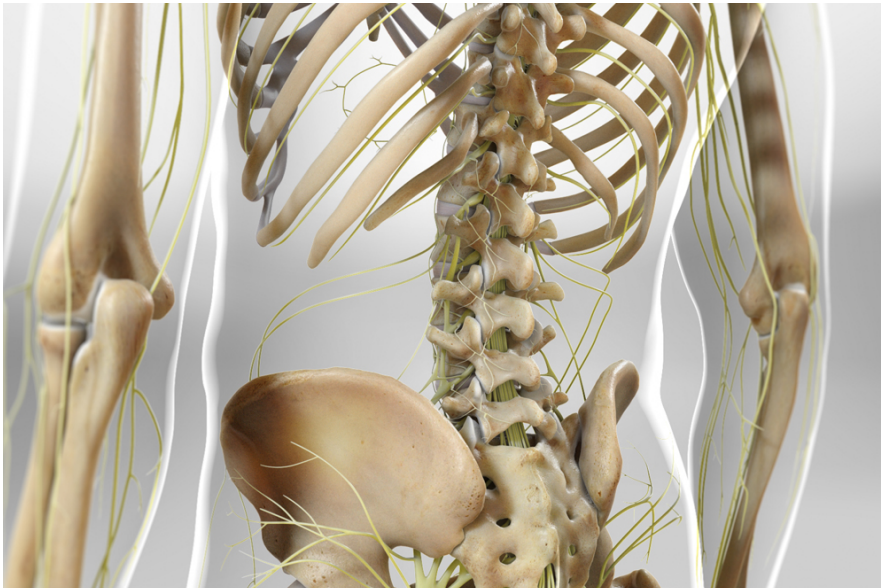




Facet Joint Syndrome



Overview

This is a problem with the facet joints of the spine. These are the joints where one vertebra connects to another. They support your spine, while allowing it to bend and twist. With this syndrome, these joints become stiff and painful.

Anatomy

Let's take a closer look at a healthy facet joint. The surfaces of the bones are lined with cartilage. They glide against each other smoothly. The joint is covered with a capsule of connective tissue. It contains lubricating fluid.

Damaged joints

When you have facet joint syndrome, these joints are damaged and swollen. This can happen because of injury or overuse. The cartilage may wear away, so the bones don't glide smoothly. This makes it hard for your spine to bend and twist properly.

Symptoms

What are the symptoms? It depends on which part of the spine is affected. You may have trouble turning your head. You may find it hard to stand up from a chair. It may be hard to stand up straight, so you may hunch over when you walk. And you may have pain and other problems.

Treatment

How do we treat it? We start with things like joint injections, medications and physical therapy. If these don't help, we can treat the nerve roots to block pain. We may recommend surgery. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you.