



Spondylolysis



Overview

This is a crack that forms in a narrow bridge of bone at the back of a vertebra. A vertebra is one of the bones that forms your spine. Often, this injury happens in the lumbar spine. It can happen to people of all ages. But, we most often see it in children and teens. That's because their bones are still growing.

Causes

How does this type of fracture happen? Well, in many cases, it's linked to sports that put a lot of stress on the lower back. Weight lifting, gymnastics and football can all cause it.

Symptoms

You can have spondylolysis and not have any symptoms. But it can cause back pain. It may feel like a muscle strain that gets worse with activity. It may radiate down through your buttocks and thighs. If the crack weakens the vertebra so much that it becomes unstable, it may shift out of its proper place. This puts pressure on your nerves. It can lead to muscle spasms, stiffness and other problems.

Treatment

Treatment depends on your needs. You may benefit from rest, a back brace, medications and physical therapy. If these don't help, you may need surgery. Your healthcare provider will create a plan that's right for you.