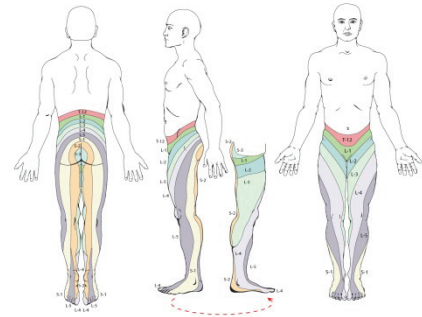


Lumbar Stenosis

Stenosis is the medical term for narrowing. The lumbar spine has five vertebral bodies in the lower back. Nerve roots exit off the spinal cord travel through the spinal canal and then through small openings on the sides of the vertebrae (foramen). When the foramen is narrowed or has osteophytes (bone spurs) causing compression or irritation to the nerve roots, this is called foraminal stenosis.



The entire spinal canal can be narrowed by a combination of bulging discs, facet joint hypertrophy and/or ligamentum flavum hypertrophy. When this occurs and the buttock and leg symptoms are bilateral, this is central stenosis.

Lumbar stenosis can result in a variety of symptoms. Typically, symptoms are felt in the buttock and legs but can be in the low back as well. Keep in mind that if a spine is degenerated enough for stenosis, there may also be facet joint arthrosis as well. The symptoms can be tingling (paresthesia), pain, numbness, or weakness (in order of severity).

The lumbar dermatomes are listed for referral patterns of numbness or tingling per nerve root as adapted from several anatomy books.