

## Q When is it time for surgery

A Surgical procedures are usually done to:

- 1 Remove pressure from the nerve roots
- 2 Remove pressure from the spinal cord
- 3 Stop the motion between two damaged vertebrae
- 4 Preserve the motion by repairing or replacing the disc between two vertebrae
- 5 Treat pain, numbness or weakness

## TERMS TO KNOW

- **Degenerative disc disease or DDD** — occurs when the discs between the vertebral bones wear out or are injured, causing pain or limiting daily activities.
- **Herniated disc** — when the shock-absorbing disc between the vertebrae ruptures or tears open.
- **Scoliosis** — occurs when the spine twists and develops an S- or C-shaped sideways curve.
- **Spinal stenosis** — narrowing of the normal spaces needed for the spinal cord and other nerves.
- **Spondylosis** — when the space between the vertebrae gets smaller.
- **Spondylolisthesis** — occurs when a vertebra slips out of place.
- **Vertebral fracture** — caused by injury to the vertebrae or by crumbling from osteoporosis.

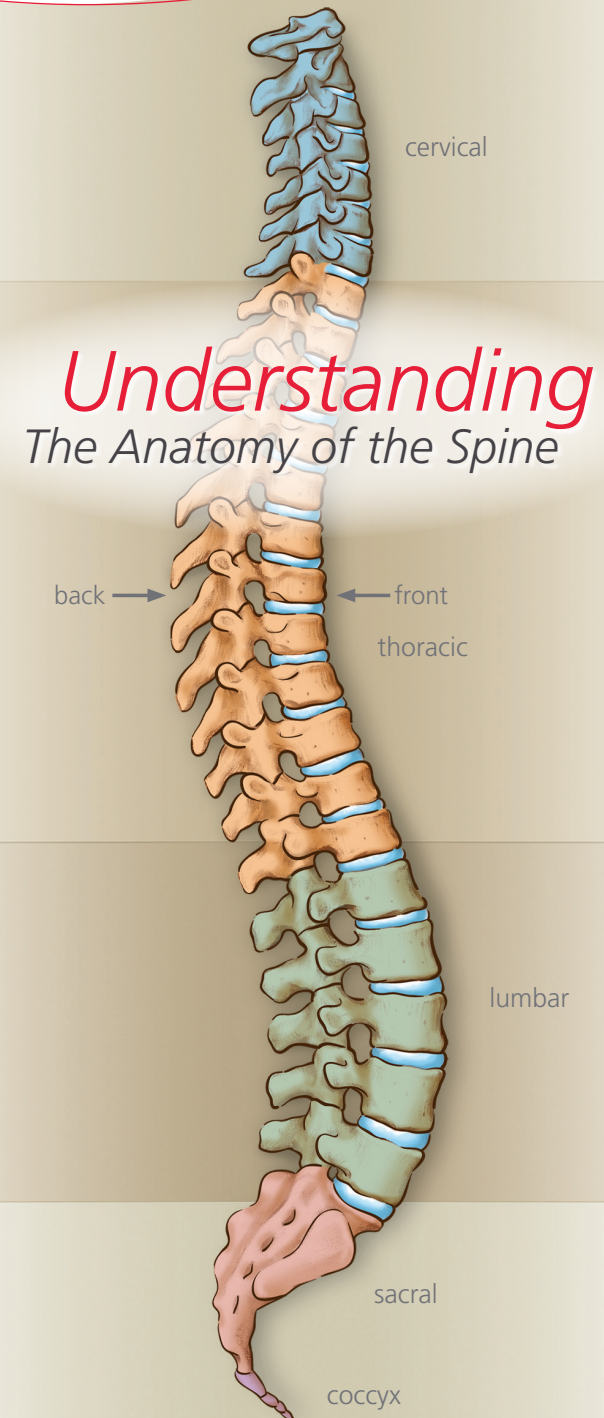
For more information go to:

[www.AllAboutBackandNeckPain.com](http://www.AllAboutBackandNeckPain.com)

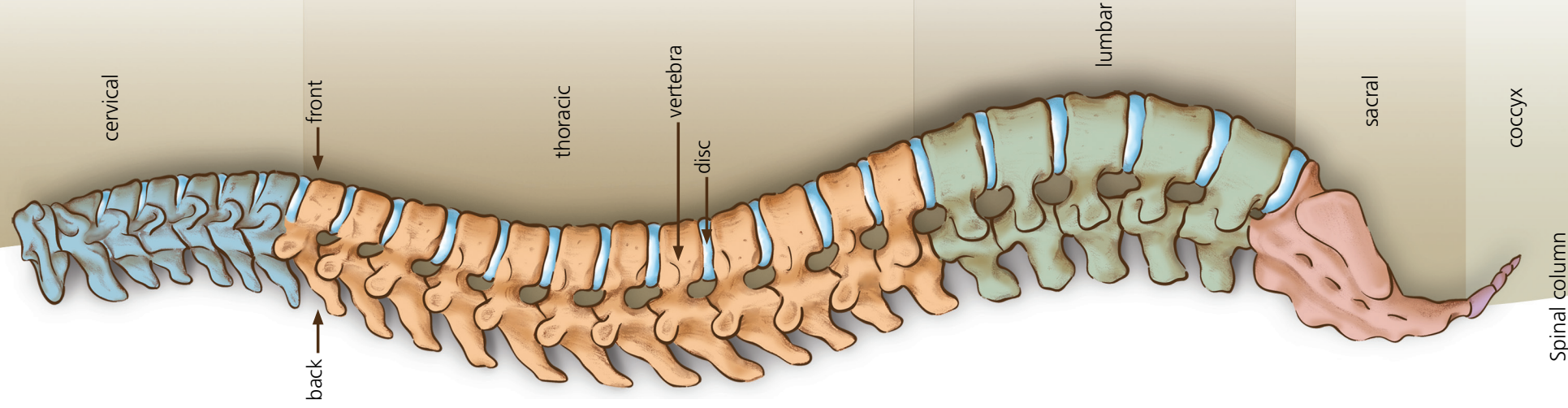
*As your doctor, I look forward to answering any questions you have about your back and neck.*


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## Spine segments



### 1 Cervical (sur-vi-kel) spine

- The neck, or cervical spine, curves slightly inward creating a gentle arch behind your neck
- Starts at the bottom of the skull and ends just above shoulder level
- Made up of the first 7 vertebrae in the neck, C1 to C7
- Provides much more movement than the rest of the spine

### 2 Thoracic (thor-a-sik) spine

- The mid-back, or thoracic spine, is curved outward in the opposite direction of the cervical spine
- Made up of the 12 middle vertebrae that coincide with 12 pairs of ribs, T1 to T12
- Connects to your ribs and forms part of the back wall of the rib cage area between the neck and diaphragm
- Allows for less movement than the rest of the spine

### 3 Lumbar (lum-bar) spine

- The lower back, or lumbar spine, curves inward creating an arch with the same shape as the neck
- Made up of 5 vertebrae in the lower back above the sacrum, L1 to L5
- Carries most of the body's weight
- Responsible for the majority of bending and rotation

### 4 Sacrum (sayk-rem)

- Below the lumbar spine
- Made up of 5 fused vertebrae, S1 to S5
- Connects the spine to the pelvis
- Forms the base of the spine and center of the pelvis

### 5 Coccyx (kok-siks)

- Small bone at the end of the spinal column
- Known as the tailbone
- Made of up 3 or 4 fused vertebrae below the sacrum

## Spine Facts

Your spine is an amazing structure! The 24 bones of your spine, called vertebrae, are stacked on top of each other in a column. They are the building blocks of your spinal column. The vertebrae are arranged to create a hollow passage that protects and supports the spinal cord and its many nerves.

Soft gel-like cushions called discs separate the vertebral bones. These soft discs of cartilage act as “shock absorbers” between the vertebral bones. The discs keep the bones from rubbing against each other and allow your back to twist, flex and bend.

## Did You Know...

### Your spine

- Lets you stand upright
- Provides structure and support
- Permits free movement and flexible bending
- Protects your spinal cord