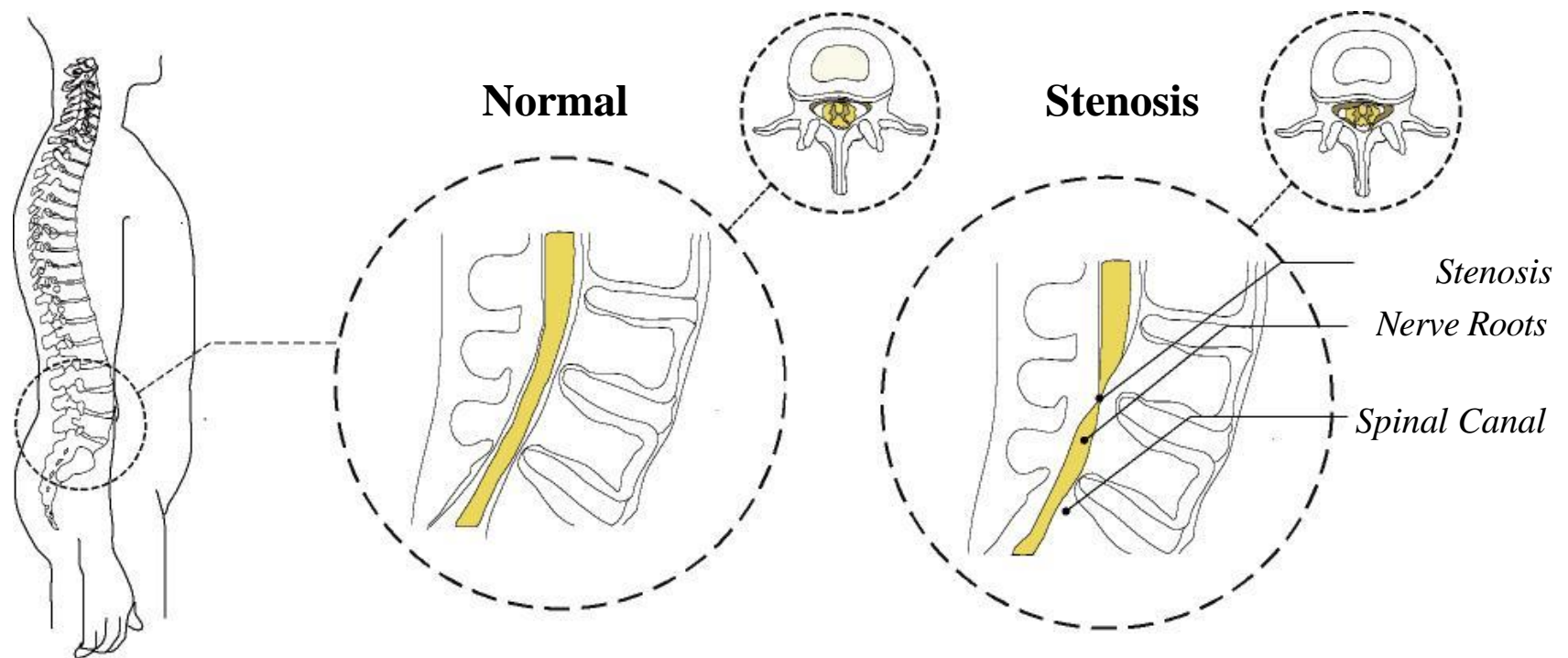


Spinal Stenosis

Spinal stenosis is the narrowing of the bony canal that exists in the spinal column through which the spinal cord and nerve roots pass. The most common site of spinal stenosis is in the lower back. The reason the canal becomes narrowed is often because a disc is pushing backwards into the canal or the bony structures become arthritic and additional bone can grow into the spinal canal, causing a closing of the channel.

The most common presentation of spinal stenosis is the gradual onset of pain when a person walks for a fixed distance. Typically this is described as back or leg pain or leg or back heaviness that progresses to the point where a person must sit down. Typically after a brief period of sitting the patient is more comfortable, the pain resolves, and they can get up and walk again, typically the same fixed distance before they become symptomatic, again. These patients often find it more comfortable to lean forward slightly as they walk and their posture gradually changes to a leaning forward posture. As the condition progresses it can limit a person's ability to walk more and more and it is usually at this point that they complain to their doctors about the condition.



Spinal stenosis is most often treated with epidural steroid injections. The success of epidural steroid injection is often recognized although the benefit is not permanent. Typically the steroid injection causes a decrease in inflammation as it becomes squeezed and as these structures return to normal there is usually more room for them to pass.