



## OSTEOARTHRITIS IN THE SPINE:

Osteoarthritis in the spine is a condition that affects the joints in your neck and lower back, leading to pain, stiffness, and reduced movement. This is a common form of arthritis that develops as we age, and it occurs when the cartilage between the spinal joints gradually wears down. When this protective cushion is reduced, the bones can rub against each other, causing pain and discomfort.

**Causes of Osteoarthritis in the Spine:** Osteoarthritis in the spine can develop due to several factors, including:

- **Age:** Natural wear and tear over time
- **Previous injuries:** Injuries or strain on the spine can increase the risk
- **Genetics:** A family history of arthritis may increase your chances
- **Lifestyle factors:** Heavy lifting, repetitive movements, and obesity can put extra pressure on the spine

**Common Symptoms:** Symptoms of spinal osteoarthritis can range from mild to severe and often include:

- **Pain and stiffness** in the neck or lower back, especially in the morning or after sitting for long periods
- **Limited flexibility** in the spine, making it harder to bend or twist
- **Numbness or tingling** if nearby nerves are affected
- **Pain radiating to the arms or legs**, which may occur if there's pressure on a nerve root

**Diagnosis and Treatment:** Dr. Shankar Acharya, Chairman of the Department of Spine Surgery at Sir Gangaram Hospital, may recommend imaging tests like X-rays or MRIs to diagnose osteoarthritis in the spine and assess its severity.



Dr. Shankar Acharya

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The treatment approach typically focuses on managing pain and improving mobility. Common treatment options include:

- **Medication:** Pain relievers and anti-inflammatory medications.
- **Physical therapy:** Exercises to strengthen the muscles around the spine and improve flexibility.
- **Lifestyle modifications:** Maintaining a healthy weight, staying active, and practicing good posture can help relieve pressure on the spine.
- **Hot and cold therapy:** Applying heat can relax muscles, while cold packs can reduce inflammation.

In more advanced cases, when conservative treatments do not provide relief, Dr. Acharya may consider injections or, in rare cases, surgery to relieve symptoms and improve function.

**Living with Spinal Osteoarthritis:** With a personalized treatment plan, many people with osteoarthritis in the spine can manage their symptoms and continue with daily activities.



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