

# Spondylolysis (Spine Stress Fracture): How to Care for Your Child

Spondylolysis is a stress fracture of the spine. It can happen from repeated stress or from an injury to the spine. It usually heals quickly with rest and physical therapy. A back stress fracture can develop over time as a child's growing spine is put under repeated stress from lots of bending, twisting or tightening of the back muscles.

- Your child can walk and go up and down stairs as usual.
- Your child needs to take a break from gym and sports until your health care provider gives the OK.
- Remind your child NOT to bend backward.
- If your child has pain and your health care provider says it's OK, you can give one of these medicines:
  - acetaminophen (such as Tylenol® or a store brand)
  - OR
  - ibuprofen (such as Advil®, Motrin® or a store brand)
- If your child is uncomfortable, it might help to place a bag of ice wrapped in a towel or washcloth on the injured area.
- If your health care provider recommended physical therapy or exercises, help your child to follow the instructions.
- If your health care provider prescribed a back brace, help your child wear it as recommended.

## CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM IF

Your child:

- feels tingling or weakness in the back or legs
- needs to use the bathroom a lot more often or a lot less often than usual
- loses control of urination (peeing)
- loses control of bowel movements (pooping)
- has trouble moving or controlling the tower body

Most kids will feel better in 3 months. Your child should wait until the pain is gone before playing contact sports. To help prevent more serious back problems, an injury should be completely better before your child returns to these activities.

After recovery, kids and teens need to keep up with the proper techniques and keep their core muscles strong and flexible, and take breaks between sports seasons, games and competitions. Kids and teens should immediately stop doing any activity that causes back pain. They should see their health care provider and not return to play until the pain goes away.

<https://kidshealth.org/NemoursEMR/en/parents/spondylolysis.html>

# Spondylolisthesis: How to Care for Your Child

Spondylolisthesis is when a vertebra slips out of place. It usually starts with a stress fracture that gets worse. If there is a crack on both sides of the vertebra, it may slip forward. Most of the time, the front slides away only a little bit. But if it slides away a lot, surgery might be needed. Rest and physical therapy help most kids feel better.

- Your child should rest as much as possible.
- Your child can walk and go up and down stairs as usual.
- Your child should take a break from gym and sports until your health care provider gives the OK.
- Remind your child NOT to bend backward.
- If your child has pain and your health care provider says it's OK, you can give one of these medicines:
  - acetaminophen (such as Tylenol® or a store brand)
- **OR**
  - ibuprofen (such as Advil®, Motrin® or a store brand)
- If your child is uncomfortable, it might help to:
  - Place a bag of ice wrapped in a towel or washcloth on the injured area.
  - Place a heating pad wrapped in a towel on the injured area.
- If sitting is uncomfortable, try changing positions or standing up.
- Help your child do the recommended physical therapy or exercises.
- If your health care provider prescribed a back brace, help your child wear it as recommended.
- If your health care provider wants your child to carry a lighter backpack, talk to the school about borrowing an extra set of books to keep at home.

## CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM IF

Your child:

- feels tingling or weakness in the back or legs
- needs to use the bathroom a lot more often or a lot less often than usual
- has constant, severe pain that doesn't get better with pain medicine or a change in sitting or standing positions
- loses control of urination (peeing)
- loses control of bowel movements (pooping)
- has trouble moving or controlling the lower body