

# Spondylarthritis

## Fast Facts

- Spondyloarthritis is a type of arthritis that attacks the spine and, in some people, the joints of the arms and legs. It can also involve the skin, intestines and eyes. The main symptom (what you feel) in most patients is low back pain. This occurs most often in axial spondyloarthritis.
- In a minority of patients, the major symptom is pain and swelling in the arms and legs. This type is known as peripheral spondyloarthritis.
- People in their teens and 20s, particularly males, are affected most often. Family members of those with spondyloarthritis are at higher risk.
- Many people with axial spondyloarthritis progress to having some degree of spinal fusion, known as ankylosing spondylitis. This more often strikes young males.
- [Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs](#) (commonly called NSAIDs) offer symptom relief for most patients by reducing pain and swelling. Other medicines called [anti-TNF drugs](#) or TNF blockers are effective in patients who do not respond enough to NSAIDs.
- Newer treatments have helped a great deal in controlling symptoms, and frequent fitness activities and back exercises are helpful.

Spondyloarthritis (or spondyloarthropathy) is the name for a family of inflammatory rheumatic diseases that cause arthritis. It differs from other types of arthritis, because it involves the sites where ligaments and tendons attach to bones called “entheses.” Symptoms present in two main ways. The first is inflammation causing pain and stiffness, most often of the spine. Some forms can affect the hands and feet or arms and legs. The second type is bone destruction causing deformities of the spine and poor function of the shoulders and hips.

The most common is ankylosing spondylitis, which affects mainly the spine. Others include:

- axial spondyloarthritis, which affects mainly the spine and pelvic joints
- peripheral spondyloarthritis, affecting mostly the arms and legs
- [reactive arthritis](#) (formerly known as Reiter's syndrome)
- [psoriatic arthritis](#)
- enteropathic arthritis/spondylitis associated with inflammatory bowel diseases (ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease).

For more information:

<https://www.rheumatology.org/I-Am-A/Patient-Caregiver/Diseases-Conditions/Spondyloarthritis>