

Osteophytes Definition

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Osteophytes is a term referring to [bone spurs](#), smooth structures that form on the spine over a long period of time. Bone spurs are physical indications that there is degeneration in the spine and become common with age.

As disc material degenerates, ligaments at the [facet joint](#) loosen and gradually thicken in order to continue to hold vertebrae together. These ligaments tend to calcify resulting in bone spurs. Bone spurs do not directly cause back pain but influence the development of other spinal disorders such as [osteoarthritis](#) and [spinal stenosis](#).

Degeneration, bone spur development and related disorders result in neck and back pain, radiating arm and [leg pain](#) and weakness in the extremities.

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