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Bone spurs

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Bone spurs are bony projections that develop along bone edges. Bone spurs (osteophytes) often form where bones meet each other — in your joints. They can also form on the bones of your spine.

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The main cause of bone spurs is the joint damage associated with osteoarthritis. Most bone spurs cause no symptoms and can go undetected for years. They might not require treatment. If treatment is needed, it depends on where spurs are located and how they affect your health.

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Symptoms

Most bone spurs cause no signs or symptoms. You might not realize you have bone spurs until an X-ray for another condition reveals the growths. In some cases, though, bone spurs can cause pain and loss of motion in your joints.

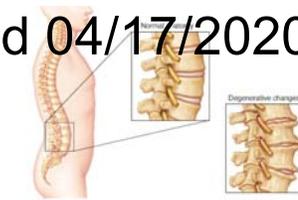


Osteoarthritis of the hip

Specific symptoms depend on where the bone spurs are. Examples include:

- **Knee.** Bone spurs in your knee can make it painful to extend and bend your leg.
- **Spine.** On your vertebrae, bone spurs can narrow the space that contains your spinal cord. These bone spurs can pinch the spinal cord or its nerve roots and can cause weakness or numbness in your arms or legs.
- **Hip.** Bone spurs can make it painful to move your hip, although you might feel the pain in your knee. Depending on their placement, bone spurs can reduce the range of motion in your hip joint.

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**Bone spurs on spine**

When to see a doctor

Make an appointment with your doctor if you have pain or swelling in one or more joints or if you have difficulty moving a joint.

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Causes

Joint damage from osteoarthritis is the most common cause of bone spurs. As osteoarthritis breaks down the cartilage cushioning the ends of your bones, your body attempts to repair the loss by creating bone spurs near the damaged area.

Risk factors

The risk of bone spurs is higher in people who have arthritis.

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