

[Home](#) → [Health Topics](#) → [Spina Bifida](#)URL of this page: <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spinabifida.html>

Spina Bifida

Also called: Cleft spine, Open spine




Spina bifida is a neural tube defect [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/neuraltubedefects.html>] - a type of birth defect of the brain, spine, or spinal cord. It happens if the spinal column of the fetus doesn't close completely during the first month of pregnancy. This can damage the nerves and spinal cord. Screening tests during pregnancy can check for spina bifida. Sometimes it is discovered only after the baby is born.

The symptoms of spina bifida vary from person to person. Most people with spina bifida are of normal intelligence. Some people need assistive devices such as braces, crutches, or wheelchairs. They may have learning difficulties, urinary and bowel problems, or hydrocephalus [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/hydrocephalus.html>], a buildup of fluid in the brain.


The exact cause of spina bifida is unknown. It seems to run in families. Taking folic acid [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/folicacid.html>] can reduce the risk of having a baby with spina bifida. It's in most multivitamins. Women who could become pregnant should take it daily.

NIH: National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke


Start Here

- Spina Bifida [<http://www.cdc.gov/NCBDDD/spinabifida/facts.html>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Spina Bifida [<http://www.marchofdimes.org/baby/spina-bifida.aspx>] (March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation)
- Spina Bifida [<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/spina-bifida/basics/definition/CON-20035356?=1&p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Spina Bifida [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/spinabifida/conditioninfo/Pages/default.aspx>]  (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
- Spina Bifida [http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/spina_bifida/detail_spina_bifida.htm]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
Available in Spanish [http://espanol.ninds.nih.gov/trastornos/espina_bifida.htm]
- Spina Bifida [http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/spina_bifida/spina_bifida.htm]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke) - **Short Summary**
- Spina Bifida (For Parents) [<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/spina-bifida.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Available in Spanish [<http://kidshealth.org/es/parents/spina-bifida-esp.html>]


Diagnosis and Tests

- How Do Health Care Providers Diagnose Spina Bifida? [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/spinabifida/conditioninfo/Pages/diagnose.aspx>]  (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
- Second Trimester Maternal Serum Screening [<https://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/triple-screen/tab/test>] (American Association for Clinical Chemistry)

Prevention and Risk Factors

- MedlinePlus: Folic Acid [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/folicacid.html>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Available in Spanish [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/folicacid.html>]



Treatments and Therapies

- Hydrocephalus and Shunts [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Hydrocephalus-and-Shunts1.pdf>] (Spina Bifida Association of America) - **PDF**
Available in Spanish [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/SB-Latino-2015-Hidrocefalia-y-Derivaciones.pdf>]
- Meningocele repair - slideshow [https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/presentations/100128_1.htm]
Available in Spanish [https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100128_1.htm]
- What Are the Treatments for Spina Bifida and Related Conditions? [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/spinabifida/conditioninfo/Pages/treatment.aspx>]  (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)

Living With

- Health Issues and Treatments [<http://www.cdc.gov/NCBDDD/spinabifida/treatment.html>]
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
Available in Spanish [<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/spanish/spinabifida/treatment.html>]



Related Issues

- Are There Disorders or Conditions Associated with Spina Bifida? [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/spinabifida/conditioninfo/Pages/disorders-conditions.aspx>]
 (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
- Hypertension and Spina Bifida [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Hypertension-Updated.pdf>] (Spina Bifida Association of America) - **PDF**
- Living with Spina Bifida [<http://www.cdc.gov/NCBDDD/spinabifida/living.html>]
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
Available in Spanish [<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/spanish/spinabifida/living.html>]
- Prenatal Surgery: Helping Babies Before Birth [<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/2012-prenatal.html>]
(Nemours Foundation)
- Tethered Spinal Cord Syndrome [http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/tethered_cord/tethered_cord.htm]
 (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke) - **Short Summary**
- Type 2 Diabetes and Spina Bifida [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Type-2-diabetes-Updated1.pdf>] (Spina Bifida Association of America) - **PDF**

Specifics

- Frequently Asked Questions about Spina Bifida [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/faqs-about-sb/>]
(Spina Bifida Association of America)
- Spina Bifida Occulta [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Spina-Bifida-Occulta1.pdf>]
(Spina Bifida Association of America) - **PDF**
Available in Spanish [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/SB-Latino-2015-Espina-Bifida-Ocultta.pdf>]

Genetics

- Genetics and Spina Bifida [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Genetics-and-Spina-Bifida1.pdf>] (Spina Bifida Association of America) - **PDF**
Available in Spanish [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/SB-Latino-2015-Genetica.pdf>]
- Genetics Home Reference: spina bifida [<https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/spina-bifida>]
 (National Library of Medicine)
- Genetics Home Reference: spondylocostal dysostosis [<https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/spondylocostal-dysostosis>]
 (National Library of Medicine)

Health Check Tools

- Test Your Knowledge of Spina Bifida [<http://www.cdc.gov/features/spinabifidaquiz/index.html>]
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
Available in Spanish [<http://www.cdc.gov/Spanish/especialesCDC/CuestionarioEspinaBifida/>]

Statistics and Research

- Spina Bifida Data and Statistics [<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/spinabifida/data.html>]
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)



Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Health Care for Certain Children of Vietnam Veterans and Certain... [<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27051894?tool=MedlinePlus>]
- Article: Commentary on "Low 25-Hydroxyvitamin D Levels in Children With Spina..." [<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26741871?tool=MedlinePlus>]
- Article: Low 25-Hydroxyvitamin D Levels in Children with Spina Bifida. [<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26741870?tool=MedlinePlus>]
- Spina Bifida -- see more articles [[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=spinal+dysraphism\[majr\]+AND+humans\[mh\]+AND+english\[la\]+NOT+\(letter\[pt\]+OR+editorial\[pt\]\)+AND+%22last+1+Year%22\[edat\]&tool=MedlinePlus](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=spinal+dysraphism[majr]+AND+humans[mh]+AND+english[la]+NOT+(letter[pt]+OR+editorial[pt])+AND+%22last+1+Year%22[edat]&tool=MedlinePlus)]

Find an Expert

- March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation [<http://www.marchofdimes.org/>]
Available in Spanish [<http://nacersano.marchofdimes.org/>]

- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/Pages/index.aspx>] 
Available in Spanish [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/espanol/Pages/default.aspx>]
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/>] 
Available in Spanish [<http://espanol.ninds.nih.gov/>]

Children

- Learning Among Children with Spina Bifida [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Learning-among-Children-with-Spina-Bifida1.pdf>] (Spina Bifida Association of America) - **PDF**
- Pediatric Urinary Tract Infection [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/PEDIATRIC-URINARY-TRACT-INFECTIONS2.pdf>] (Spina Bifida Association of America) - **PDF**
- Precocious Puberty [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Precocious-Puberty1.pdf>] (Spina Bifida Association of America) - **PDF**
Available in Spanish [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/SB-Latino-2015-Pubertad-Precoz.pdf>]
- Spina Bifida [<http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/spina-bifida.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Available in Spanish [<http://kidshealth.org/es/kids/spina-bifida-esp.html>]

Men

- Men's Health and Spina Bifida [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/MENS-HEALTH-Updated.pdf>] (Spina Bifida Association of America) - **PDF**

Women

- Healthcare for Women [<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/WOMENS-HEALTH-Updated.pdf>] (Spina Bifida Association of America) - **PDF**

Patient Handouts

- Meningocele repair [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003020.htm>]
Available in Spanish [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/003020.htm>]
- Myelomeningocele [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001558.htm>]
Available in Spanish [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/001558.htm>]



Alpha fetoprotein [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003573.htm>]

Meningocele repair [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003020.htm>]

Meningocele repair - slideshow [https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/presentations/100128_1.htm]

Myelomeningocele [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001558.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Chiari Malformation [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/chiarimalformation.html>]

Neural Tube Defects [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/neuraltubedefects.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Spina Bifida* is the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/>]

MedlinePlus links to health information from the National Institutes of Health and other federal government agencies. MedlinePlus also links to health information from non-government Web sites. See our disclaimer [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/disclaimers.html>] about external links and our quality guidelines [<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/criteria.html>] .

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