Allergy, Immunology & Rheumatology



What is Ankylosing spondylitis?

Ankylosing spondylitis (pronounced "ank-kih-low-sing spon-dill-eye-tiss), or AS for short, is a disease that causes inflammation of the spinal joints (vertebrae), ligaments, and tendons. Sometimes AS involves hips, shoulders, and less commonly hands, feet, and knees.

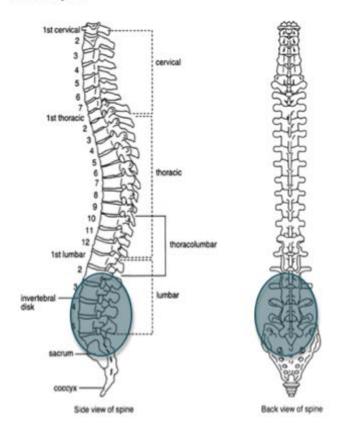
AS causes pain and stiffness (hard to move) in the lower back and neck. If not treated adequately or on time, the inflammation can lead to deformities (something that is not a normal shape) and lead to decreased movement at the spine.

Inflammation from AS can also affect other parts of the body, including the eyes, heart, lungs, and bones.

What are the most common symptoms of AS?

- Pain and stiffness
- AS usually affects your spine- lower back and neck
- AS can also affect your shoulders and hips
- Joint stiffness (hard to move)- can be severe, especially in the mornings or late at night, and can last several hours
- Usually starts in the 20's or 30's
- Feeling tired or loss of energy

Normal Spine



No one is sure what causes AS.



AS starts in the 20's or 30's. It is unlikely to start after age 45.



Men are more likely than women to get AS.



People with close family members with AS or similar diseases are more likely to get AS.

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More about AS:



AS is a chronic disease (lasts for your lifetime)



Severity of symptoms can vary from person to person and at various time points



Early diagnosis and treatment can help you control your symptoms and prevent long term damage of your joints and possibly other organs



If not adequately treated, it can make it hard to work, cause emotional and social problems, and increase risk for other conditions such as heart and bone disease.

What should you do if you think you have AS?



Contact your doctor to schedule an appointment.



Your doctor may ask questions about your symptoms to help find out if you have AS or another type of arthritis.



You may also need additional blood work and x-rays.



If your health care provider suspects that you have AS, they can refer you to the rheumatology clinic.



Contact information for the URMC Rheumatology Clinic:



Phone number: 585-486-0901



Fax number: 585-340-5399