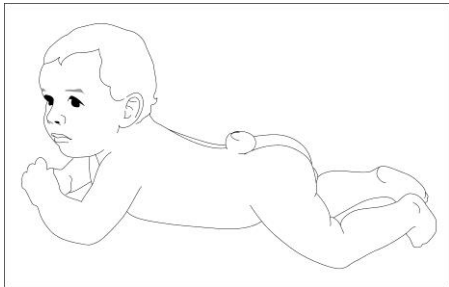


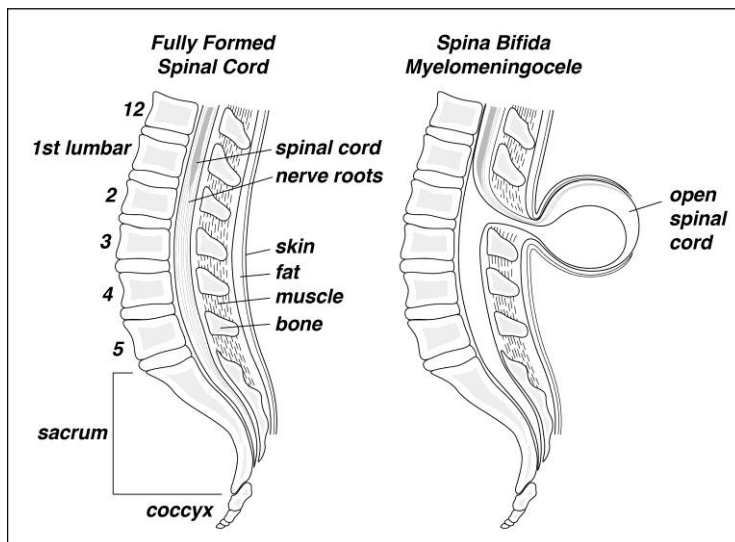
## Spina Bifida

**Spina bifida** is a type of neural tube defect. It occurs when the neural tube is forming. There are different types of spina bifida.



### Myelomeningocele

This form is the most severe. The bones of the spine and the skin that surrounds the spinal cord are not fully closed. Part of the spinal cord and the nerves come through the opening in the back. At birth, there may be a sac on the back at the site of the spinal defect. The baby will need surgery soon after birth to close the sac.



### Problems

Spina bifida may cause:

- Increased fluid in the brain (hydrocephalus). This occurs in about 95 out of 100 cases.
- Chiari defect. This is a problem with the brain that can cause swallowing, speech problems, and breathing problems.
- Abnormal curving of the spine.
- Kidney, bladder and/or bowel control problems, and bladder infections.
- Decreased movement below the level of the spina defect.
- Lack of feeling pain, touch, and temperature in areas below the level of the spinal defect.
- Foot and leg problems can range from weakness to complete loss of movement.
- Skin breakdown or pressure sores because of decreased feeling.
- Latex allergy.

### Health Care Team

Your child's health care team will include:

- **Nurses:** Will manage the team's care plan, help you find help and support, and teach you how to care for your child.
- **Neurosurgeon:** Will care for the brain and spinal cord.
- **Urologist:** Will care for the bladder and kidneys.
- **Orthopedic surgeon:** Will care for bone issues.

- **Therapists and rehab specialists:** Will help your child move and exercise. They will also teach your child how to perform daily tasks.
- **Psychologist:** Will help with social and education concerns.

Your child will often see this team on the same day at the Spina Bifida Clinic.

### **Who to Call**

To schedule a visit, please call the AFCH Pediatric Specialty Clinics at **(608) 263-6420**.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 2/2021. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5336