

Discitis

TERMINOLOGY

- Spinal infection
- Disc inflammation
- Disc infection

INTRODUCTION

The term discitis refers to inflammation of an intervertebral disc or disc space often related to infections. Discitis occurs in adults but more commonly in children. The precise cause of discitis has been the subject of debate for decades, although most authors and researchers believe that it occurs secondary to infection in most cases. The infection likely arises from the subchondral region under an endplate. This is where the blood supply comes into the bone. The disc is probably infected secondary to spread across the endplate region. An exception would be those cases where a procedure may have introduced an infectious organism directly into the disc.

PREVALENCE

Although discitis is uncommon, the condition is most prevalent in children under ten years of age. It usually develops secondary to inflammation associated with staphylococcus, viruses or other inflammatory processes. Discitis occurs with equal prevalence in boys/men and girls/women. Infectious discitis can also develop as a result of surgery. Discitis is rare in the neck (cervical spine). It occurs more often in the lower back (lumbar region) and upper-mid back (thoracic region).