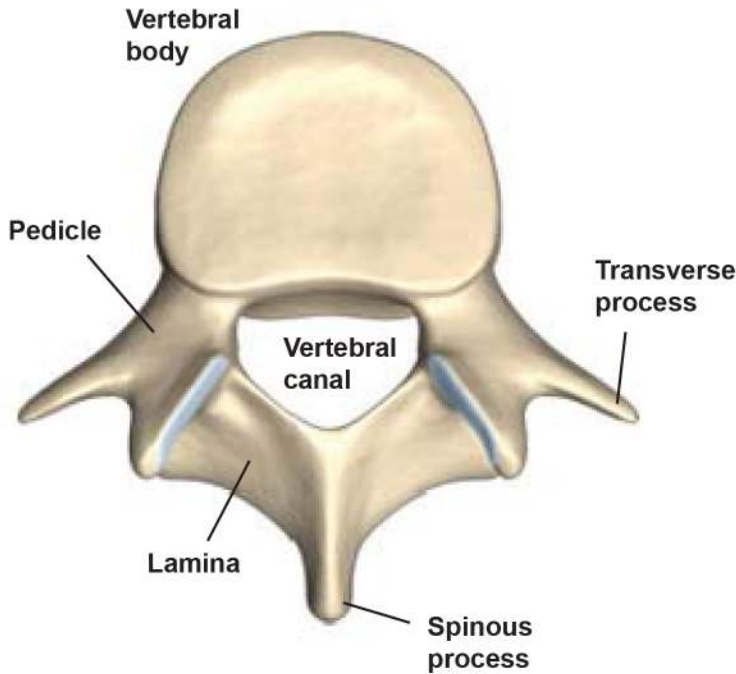




Anatomy of the Spine



Vertebral Canal

Behind the vertebral body is the vertebral canal. The spinal cord travels through this channel.

Spinal Cord

The spinal cord is the main bundle of nerve fibers connecting the brain to the rest of the body. The spinal cord ends near the L1 and L2 vertebrae, where it divides into bundles of nerve roots called the cauda equina.

Nerve Roots

Exiting the sides of the spine are nerve roots, thick nerve branches that transmit signals between the spinal cord and the other parts of the body.

Pedicles

On either side of the vertebral canal are pedicle bones, which connect the vertebral body to the lamina.

Lamina

The lamina create the outer wall of the vertebral canal, covering and protecting the spinal cord.

Spinous Process

Protruding from the back of the lamina is the spinous process. It provides an attachment point for muscles and ligaments that move and stabilize the vertebrae.

Transverse Processes

Transverse processes protrude from the sides of each vertebra. Muscles and ligaments that move and stabilize the vertebrae attach to the transverse processes.

Articular Facet

The articular facets form the joints where each vertebra connects with the vertebrae above and below it. Each vertebra has four facets (two superior facets and two inferior facets). The facet joints have a covering of cartilage, which allows movement.

Intervertebral Disc

Between the vertebral bodies are the tough, elastic spinal discs. They provide a flexible cushion, allowing the vertebrae to bend and twist. Each disc has a tough outer wall called the annulus fibrosus and a soft interior called the nucleus pulposus.

