

MULTNOMAH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PUBLIC TESTIMONY SIGN-UP

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MEETING DATE: 12/15/11

SUBJECT: SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI):  
FACT SHEET FROM CDC

AGENDA NUMBER OR TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR: \_\_\_\_\_ AGAINST: \_\_\_\_\_ THE ABOVE AGENDA ITEM

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY: CENTER FOR DISEASE  
CONTROL and PREVENTION

SPINAL CORD INJURY  
FACT SHEET (4 PAGES)  
[HTTP://WWW.CDC.GOV/TRAUMATIC  
BRAININJURY/SCTFACT.HTML](http://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/sctfact.html)

IF YOU WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD:

1. Please complete this form and return to the Board Clerk.
2. Address the County Commissioners from the presenter table microphones. Please limit your comments to **3 minutes**.
3. State your name for the official record.
4. If written documentation is presented, please furnish one copy to the Board Clerk.

IF YOU WISH TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS TO THE BOARD:

1. Please complete this form and return to the Board Clerk.
2. Written testimony will be entered into the official record.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC 24/7: Saving Lives. Protecting People. Saving Money through Prevention.



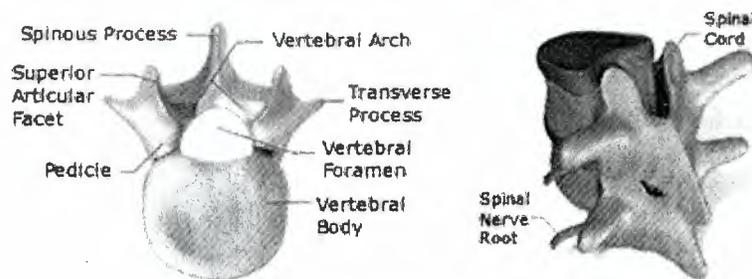
## Spinal Cord Injury (SCI): Fact Sheet

Spinal cord injury (SCI) is an important contributing factor to morbidity and mortality in the United States.

### Overview

Spinal cord injury may occur following damage to the spinal column. The spinal column comprises 31 bones called *vertebrae*: 7 cervical vertebrae (neck), 12 thoracic vertebrae (upper and middle back), 5 lumbar vertebrae (lower back), 5 sacral vertebrae (sacrum), and 2 fused coccygeal vertebrae (coccyx).

Each vertebra comprises a vertebral body and a vertebral arch, which form an enclosed opening (or vertebral foramen). The vertebrae are stacked on top of each other, aligning the vertebral foramen and forming the spinal column.



The spinal cord, the central bundle of nerves extending from the brain and branching peripherally, is responsible for transmitting signals between the brain and the rest of the body. The spinal cord is located within the spinal column. Any damage to the spinal column could affect the spinal cord and result in temporary or permanent neurologic impairments.

### Occurrence

- About 200,000 people are currently living with SCI in the United States.<sup>2,14</sup>

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- Annually, 15 to 40 new cases per million people—or 12,000 to 20,000 new patients—are estimated to occur.<sup>2,3,9,11</sup>
- Alcohol has been found to play a major factor in 25% of spinal cord injuries.<sup>1</sup>

## Long-term Complications

Traumatic injury to the spinal cord can result in neurologic impairments in any body system controlled by the affected nerves, including musculoskeletal (resulting in incomplete or complete paraplegia or tetraplegia<sup>9</sup>), respiratory,<sup>11,13</sup> urinary,<sup>7,10,11,13</sup> or gastrointestinal<sup>7,10,11,13</sup>. Long-term complications from SCI also include any psychological side effects, such as depression and anxiety<sup>5,7</sup>.

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Causes



## Cost

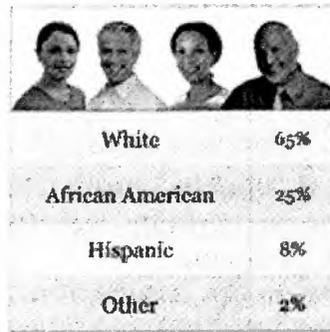
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- Average annual medical cost: \$15,000–\$30,000 per year<sup>6</sup>
- Estimated lifetime cost: \$500,000–more than \$3 million, depending on injury severity<sup>9,11</sup>

## Causes

- Motor vehicle accidents: 46%<sup>1,2,3,8,9,11</sup>
  - Use of a seatbelt can reduce the odds of a spinal cord injury by 60%<sup>4,16</sup>
  - Use of a seatbelt and airbag combined can reduce the odds of injury by 80%<sup>4</sup>
- Falls: 22%<sup>1,2,3,8,9,11</sup>
- Violence: 16%<sup>1,2,8,9,11</sup>
- Sports: 12%<sup>1,2,9,11</sup>

### Estimated SCI Racial/ Ethnic Distribution



## Demographics

- Males account for 80% of spinal cord injury patients.<sup>1,2,8,9,11,14,15</sup>
  - Most new SCI cases occur in persons younger than 30 years old;<sup>2,3</sup> an estimated 50%–70% occur in those aged 15–35 years.<sup>2</sup>
- Estimated racial/ethnic distribution:
  - White: 65%<sup>9,14</sup>
  - African American: 25%<sup>9,14</sup>
  - Hispanic: 8%<sup>9</sup>
  - Other: 2%<sup>9,14</sup>

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