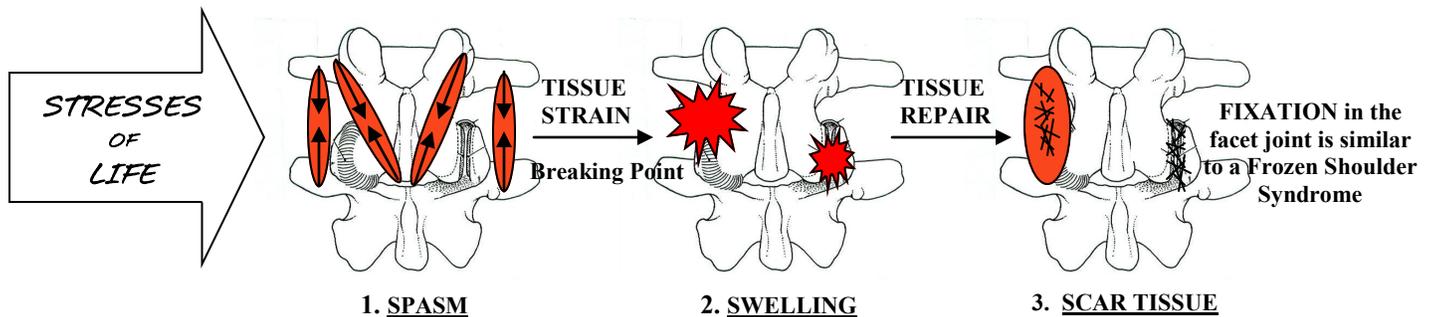


# Spinal Maintenance for D-Generates:

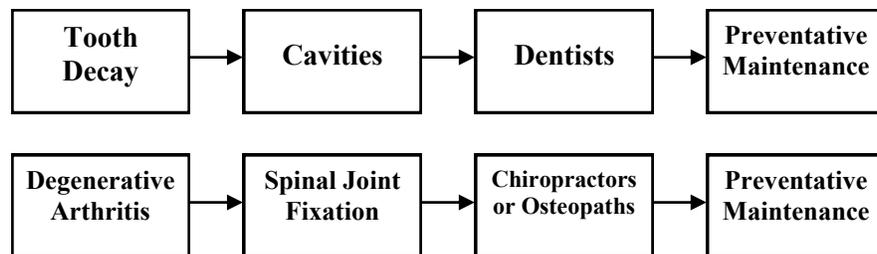
by James G. Halvorson, DC, DACAN

**THE PATHOLOGY:** Dr. William Kirkady-Willis, orthopedic surgeon, medical school professor, and author of the textbook, “Managing Low Back Pain,” divided the degenerative arthritic process into three phases: **Dysfunction, Instability, and Stabilization**. In the **Dysfunction Phase**, the stresses and strains on the spine cause muscles to tighten or spasm. Over time, the breaking point may be reached and microscopic tears in the muscles and ligaments can cause swelling and more spasm. As the tears heal with scar tissue, adhesions and trigger points can form in the muscles and ligaments and areas of restriction can develop in the joints. This pathology of **spasm, swelling and scarring (the 3 S’s)** causing **mechanical dysfunction and fixation** within the joint is very comparable to that of a **Frozen Shoulder Syndrome**. Fixations in the joints cannot be seen—they are not visualized with an x-ray or MRI—rather, they are felt or palpated. Chiropractors and osteopaths have been trained to palpate the fixations and to treat them with spinal manipulation. Manipulation breaks up the scar tissue and muscle spasm, restoring motion in the joint. This motion helps pump out fluid in the tissues and therefore, manipulation also has an anti-inflammatory effect. Spinal joint manipulation is a single treatment modality that affects the spasm, swelling and scar tissue.

## Spinal Joint Dysfunction: Spasm, Swelling, Scar Tissue (the 3 S’s) can lead to Fixation



**THE PLAN:** Take care of your spine the way you take care of your teeth. Because there is no “cure” for tooth decay, we have implemented a lifetime maintenance strategy that focuses on the prevention of cavity formation. We start brushing and flossing at an early age and we go to our dentists regularly for check-ups. We take care of our teeth in the absence of pain and we do this for a lifetime. Likewise, there is no “cure” for the degenerating spine. A lifetime maintenance strategy that focuses on the prevention and treatment of dysfunction and fixation should be implemented, even when we don’t have symptoms.



### The “Recipe” for maintaining a healthy spine:

- **Daily:** stretching, pressure point therapy (using tennis balls or soft balls), maintaining good postures (especially with bending and lifting), walking for at least 30 minutes, eating foods that are anti-inflammatory and maintaining a healthy weight.
- **3-4 x/week:** strengthening exercises and core stabilization (yoga, tai chi, Stuart McGill exercises).
- **Monthly** or once every couple months: get checked and treated for spinal joint dysfunction/fixation and have your spine treated by a chiropractor or osteopath.

[www.HalvorsonChiropracticClinic.com](http://www.HalvorsonChiropracticClinic.com)