

# Notochord

The notochord is a flexible rod made out of a material similar to [cartilage](#). If a species has a notochord, it is, by definition, a chordate. The notochord lies along with the anteroposterior ("head to tail") axis, is usually closer to the dorsal than the ventral surface of the animal, and is composed of cells derived from the [mesoderm](#). The notochord has been observed to have many functions including developmental functions. The most commonly cited functions are as a site of muscle attachment, vertebral precursor, and midline tissue that provides signals to the surrounding tissue during development.

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[Clivus chordomas](#) are slow-growing yet aggressively [invasive](#) and destructive [tumors](#), arising from the embryonic rests of the [notochord](#).

## Split notochord syndrome

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