

Understanding Microdiscectomy

Anatomy

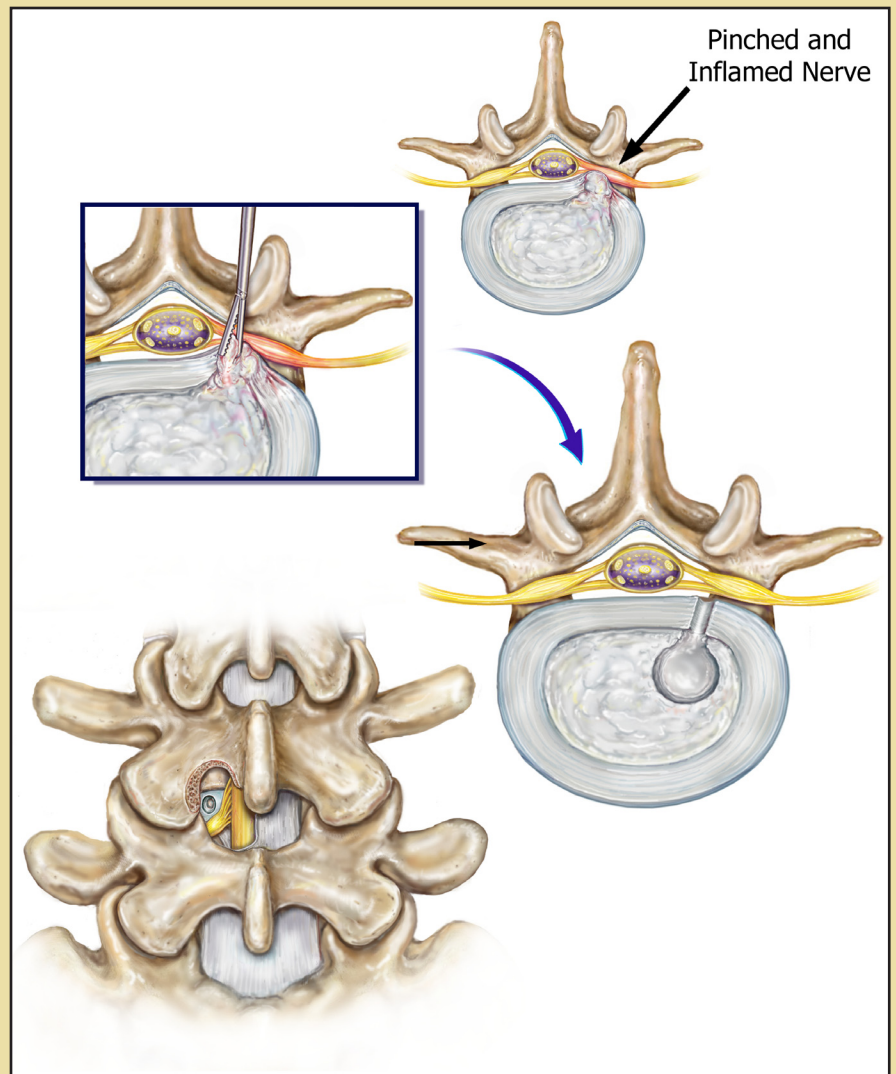
The spine supports the skeleton and protects the spinal cord within the spinal canal. Nerve roots from the spinal cord exit the spinal canal through small openings between individual vertebrae called foramen. The spinal canal is a tunnel formed by multiple vertebrae stacked on top of each other. Nerve irritation can occur if this tunnel loses its structural integrity due to a ruptured disk.

If the disk bulges posteriorly (toward the back) there can be a significant reduction of space within the tunnel. This results in impingement of the spinal canal and/or foramen.

Symptoms

Patients with spinal nerve irritation may suffer from the following: numbness and tingling, muscle weakness in arms or legs, and pain that radiates from the spine into the extremities.

Symptoms of spinal nerve irritation are diverse in presentation and severity. The preceding is only a generalization of the symptoms associated with this disorder.



CLINIC LOCATIONS

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Treatments

If non-surgical treatments such as NSAID's, physical therapy, joint mobilization and epidural steroid injections have failed to relieve your symptoms your doctor may wish to proceed with surgical intervention.

Surgical Procedure

In this procedure, your Orthopedic Surgeon will make an incision near the center of your spine. Through this incision a small hole is made (laminotomy) in the vertebrae so that your surgeon can access the bulging disk. Once visualized, the disk tissue protruding into the spinal canal is removed. Typically, there is enough disk material remaining to continue to provide support and cushion to the spine.

Once the offending tissues are removed, the incision is closed with sutures. As you heal in the weeks following surgery, the muscles and ligaments of the back will fill in where the lamina used to be.

After the Procedure

Walking is encouraged after microdiscectomy. For the six weeks following surgery excessive bending, twisting and lifting should be avoided.

As the surgical date approaches you will be provided more information outlining what to expect before and after surgery.

For additional educational materials regarding this topic please visit our website, www.summitortho.com and click on the "Patient Education" quick link.

NOTES:



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