

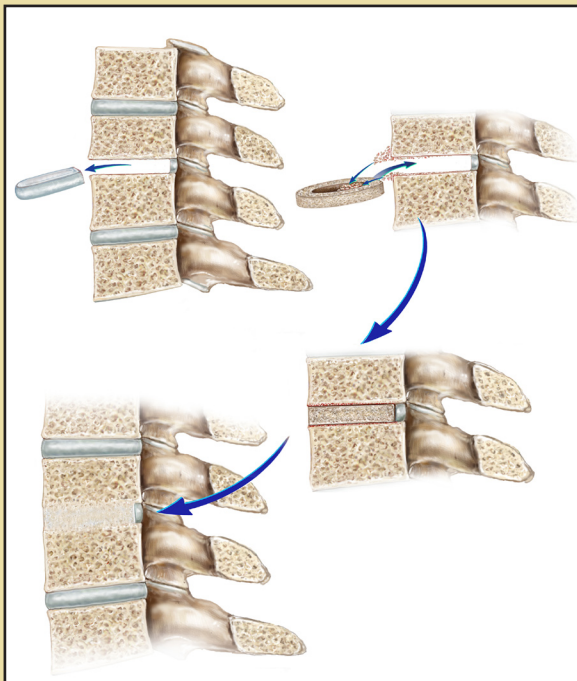
Understanding Spinal Fusion

Anatomy

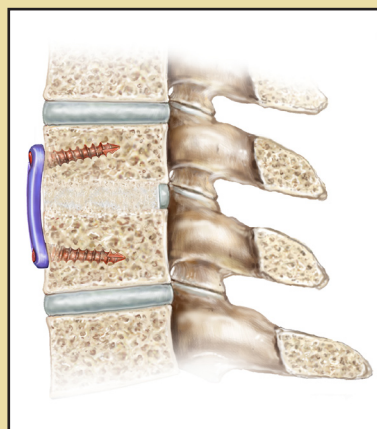
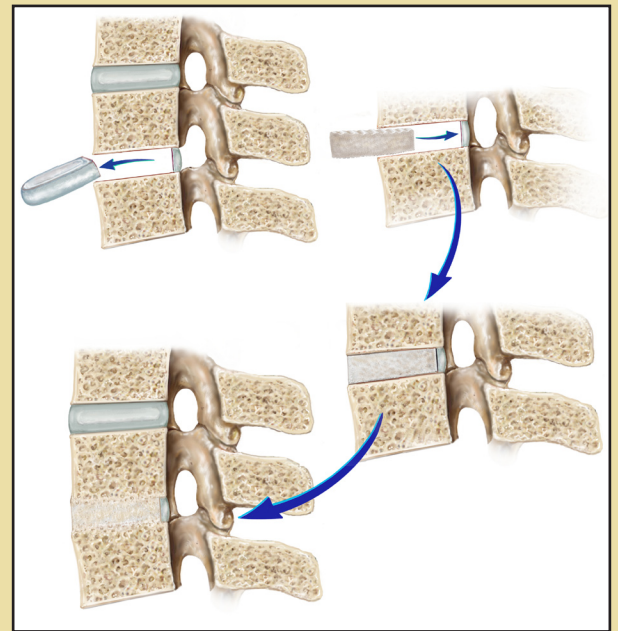
The spine is composed of alternating vertebrae and disks. This system allows for a high degree of flexibility and stability during movements and activities. In the healthy spine, the disks act as a cushion and spacer between the vertebrae. This prevents painful bone on bone rubbing and creates a foramen, or hole, through which the nerve roots from the spinal cord can pass.

In the unhealthy spine, disks may be damaged or compressed. This can be caused by trauma, arthritis or genetics. Limited motion, painful bone on bone rubbing and nerve irritation can all result from significantly damaged or compressed disks. As a consequence movement can become limited or painful. Spinal fusion is a surgical technique that binds the unhealthy vertebrae together, prevents painful bone on bone rubbing and restores the foramen through which the nerve passes through.

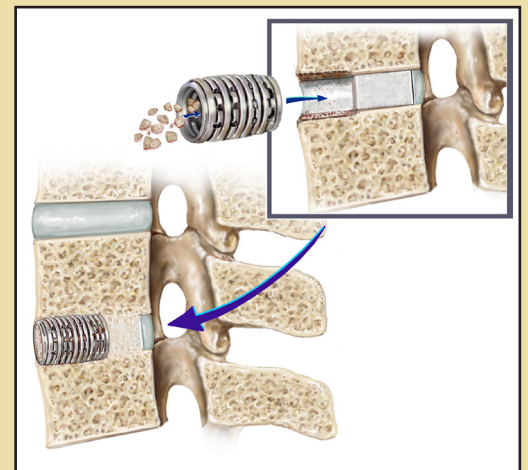
Cervical Spine Fusion



Lumbar Spine Fusion



Additional Support



Additional Support

CLINIC LOCATIONS

Columbia Heights
Eagan
Forest Lake
Downtown St. Paul
Hastings
Maplewood
Vadnais Heights
Woodbury - Allina
Woodwinds
Health Campus

CONTACT INFORMATION

Main Line
(651) 842-5200

Appointment Line
(651) 842-5201

Online at:
summitortho.com



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Additional Support For the Fusion

Your doctor may wish to further support your spinal fusion with either a plate or a cage.

- **Plate and Screws:** The plate will be long enough to cover the fused vertebrae. Your orthopedic surgeon will affix the plate with screws above and below the fused disk. The length of the plate and number of screws is based upon several factors including the number of vertebrae being fused.
- **Cage:** A cage placed between the two vertebrae can help support the fusion. Your orthopedic surgeon will place the cage between the two vertebrae that are going to be fused and back it with an artificial bone product to facilitate the fusion process.

After the Procedure

After your surgery, you will be admitted to the hospital for two to seven days. Once you are feeling better you will be allowed to go home. Depending on the location of the fusion and the procedures performed, recovery from a spinal fusion may take anywhere from three to six months. Your doctor will be able to discuss the details of the surgery and recovery with you as it approaches.

As the surgical date approaches you will be provided more information outlining what to expect before and after surgery, as well as the risks involved. If you have questions please contact your doctor, the physician assistant or the patient coordinator.

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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