

# LUMBAR MICROSURGERY

Low back surgery to help reduce pain



# PLANNING FOR LOW BACK SURGERY



## **When you have pain...**

Having pain in your low back can be very frustrating. It can interfere with even simple activities, such as bending over, sitting, standing, or walking. Sometimes, the pain will even shoot down one or both legs.

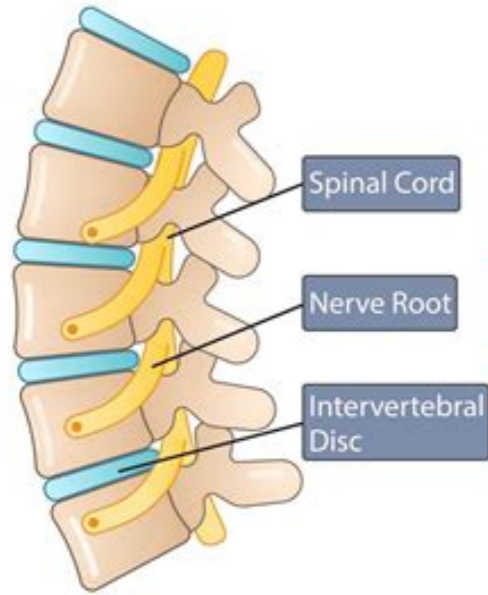
## **How does surgery help?**

Lumbar microsurgery, also known as lumbar microdiscectomy, is a way of doing surgery through a very small incision in the back. During the surgery, bone, disc material, or both may be removed to help take pressure off of the affected nerves. This may help to greatly reduce symptoms such as pain, numbness, tingling, burning, and even weakness.

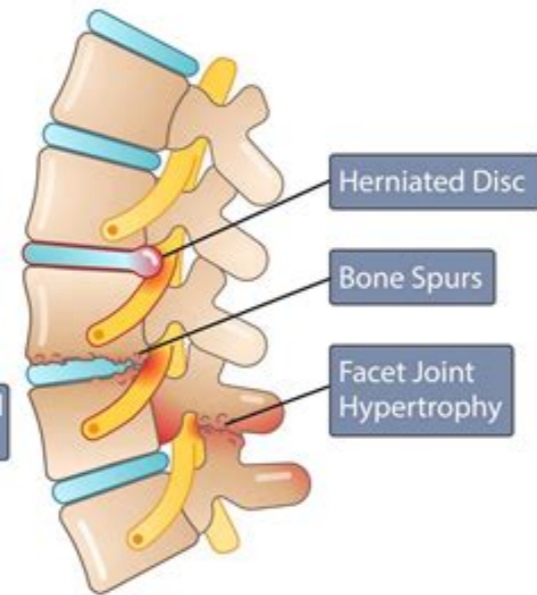
## **Why microsurgery?**

Lumbar microsurgery uses a much smaller incision than traditional lumbar surgery. Because the incision is much smaller, you may heal much faster and get back to doing the things you love. The goal is to reduce low back pain and any pain, numbness, tingling, or burning that goes down the legs, as well as relieve weakness.

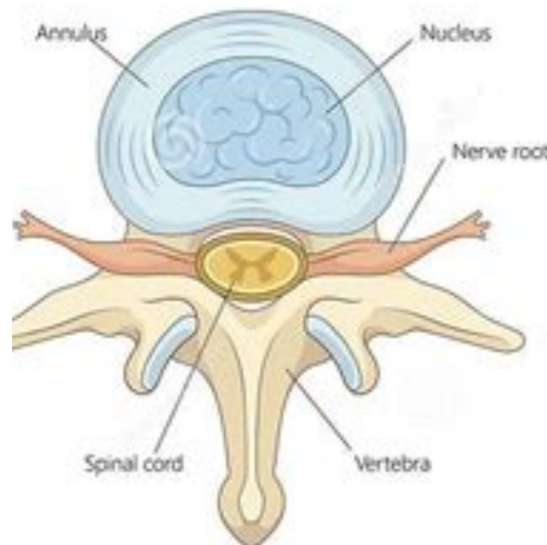
Healthy Spine



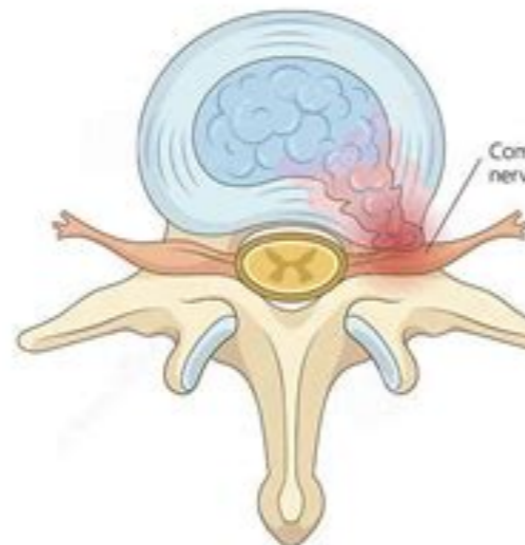
Spinal Stenosis



Normal disc



Herniated disc



## A Healthy Back

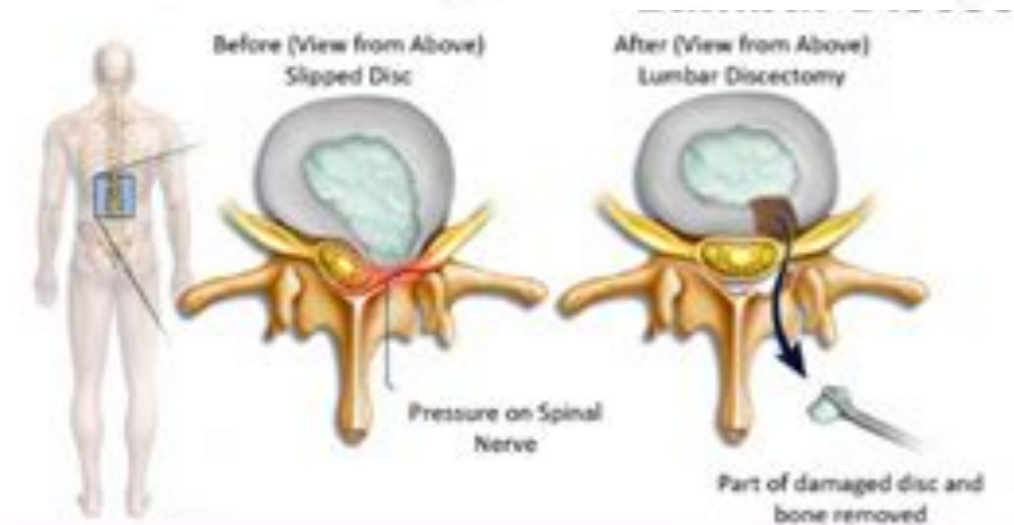
In the low back, there are 5 bones called vertebrae. These are separated by soft pads of tissue called discs. The discs are made up of a fibrous outer layer called the annulus and a soft center called a nucleus. The gap between each vertebra formed by the space of the cushioning disc is where the nerves exit the spine and go out to the body.

## Damaged Disc

Sometimes wear and tear over time can weaken the disc. When this happens, the soft material of the nucleus can bulge outward. If it bulges enough, then the nerve exiting at that level can become pinched between the nerve and the bone. This bulging of the disc is called a herniated disc.

## Surgically Fixing the Problem

During microdiscectomy, a very small incision is made in the low back to reach the bulging disc. Then, the part of the disc that is bulging out is removed, along with any loose disc material or even bone that is pressing on the nerves or that may cause problems in the future.





## **What To Expect After Surgery**

In most cases, you will be able to go home the same day. You will be expected to take it easy for the first day or two. After that, you will slowly return to activity by increasing the amount of walking that you do daily. Specific instructions will be provided for after surgery. However, most people return to most of their normal activities by about 6 weeks, except for heavy lifting, which does take up to 12 weeks.