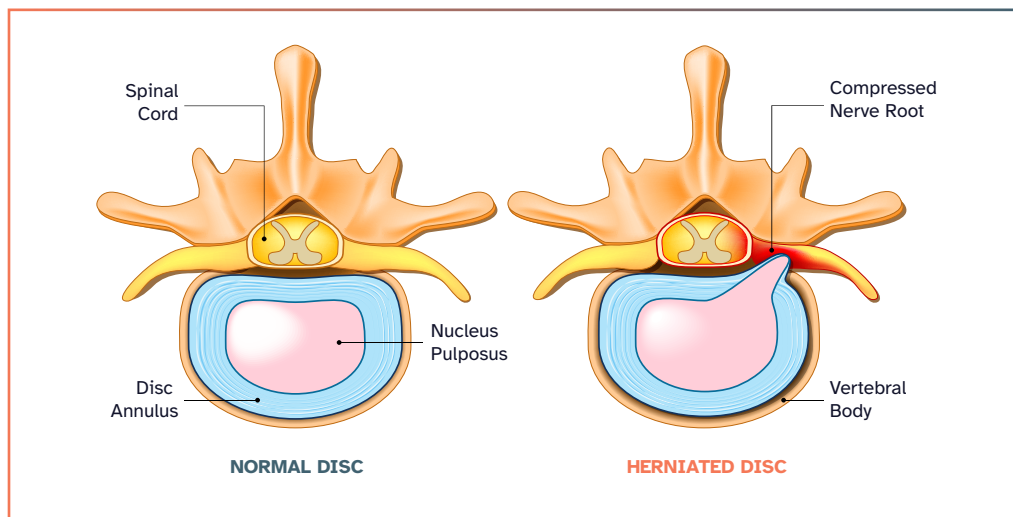


OVERVIEW

A disc herniation happens when the inner, jelly-like, layer ruptures through a weakened spot in the outer, fibrous, layer. A herniated disc can cause inflammation and irritation of surrounding spinal nerves, leading to symptoms including back pain, weakness, and/or numbness in the lower or upper extremities.

While disc herniation can occur anywhere in the spine, they most commonly occur in the lower back (lumbar spine) and neck (cervical spine).



CAUSES OF DISC HERNIATION

Normal aging causes the intervertebral discs to lose a portion of their water content, making them more susceptible to injury (disc degeneration)

Various risk factors have been identified that increase the risk of disc herniation, including:

- Physically demanding occupations that involve heavy and/or repetitive lifting, pushing, pulling and/or twisting
- Excess weight placing excess stress on the intervertebral discs
- Having a genetic predisposition

SYMPTOMS OF DISC HERNIATION

Symptoms of disc herniation vary widely, with some patients none, and others having debilitating symptoms, including:

- Pain in the neck, shoulder, and arm on the affected side
- Intensified pain with coughing, sneezing, and certain movements (extension, lateral bending, and/or rotation)
- Numbness or tingling in area that is supplied by the affected nerve
- Weakness of the muscles supplied by the affected nerve

TREATMENT FOR DISC HERNIATION

First line disc herniation treatment typically includes pain and anti-inflammatory medication, as well as muscle relaxants. Short term narcotic therapy, and antidepressants, may be recommended in cases that don't respond to first-line medication options. In persistent cases, epidural steroid injections or nerve blocks, may be recommended. In addition to traditional medicinal therapy, a trial of physical therapy or chiropractic may be recommended. Treatment may include the use of various modalities like ice and heat therapy, electrical stimulation, ultrasound, traction, and/or manual therapy. Patients will also be educated on proper lifting techniques and be provided with an exercise program to increase range of motion and strength in the affected area.

In cases that do not respond to conservative therapy, surgery may be necessary. Various surgical options exist depending on the location and extent of the disc herniation.

EXERCISE 1: Chin Tuck with Rolled Towel



Instructions:

Begin lying on your back with your neck relaxed.

Gently tuck chin directly backward as if you are making a double chin.

Hold, then relax and repeat.

Make sure not to lift your head from the ground.

EXERCISE 2: Supine Scapular Retraction



Instructions:

Begin lying on your back.

Gently press your shoulder blades down and back into the mat, squeezing your shoulder blades together. You may feel a stretch in the front of your shoulders.

Make sure to keep your neck relaxed and do not shrug your shoulders during the exercise.

Important:

The therapeutic exercises described on this page are for reference purposes only and may or may not apply directly to your condition. Only perform the exercises assigned by your physician. By using this information, you understand the potential risks connected with activity in any exercise, physical fitness or training program.