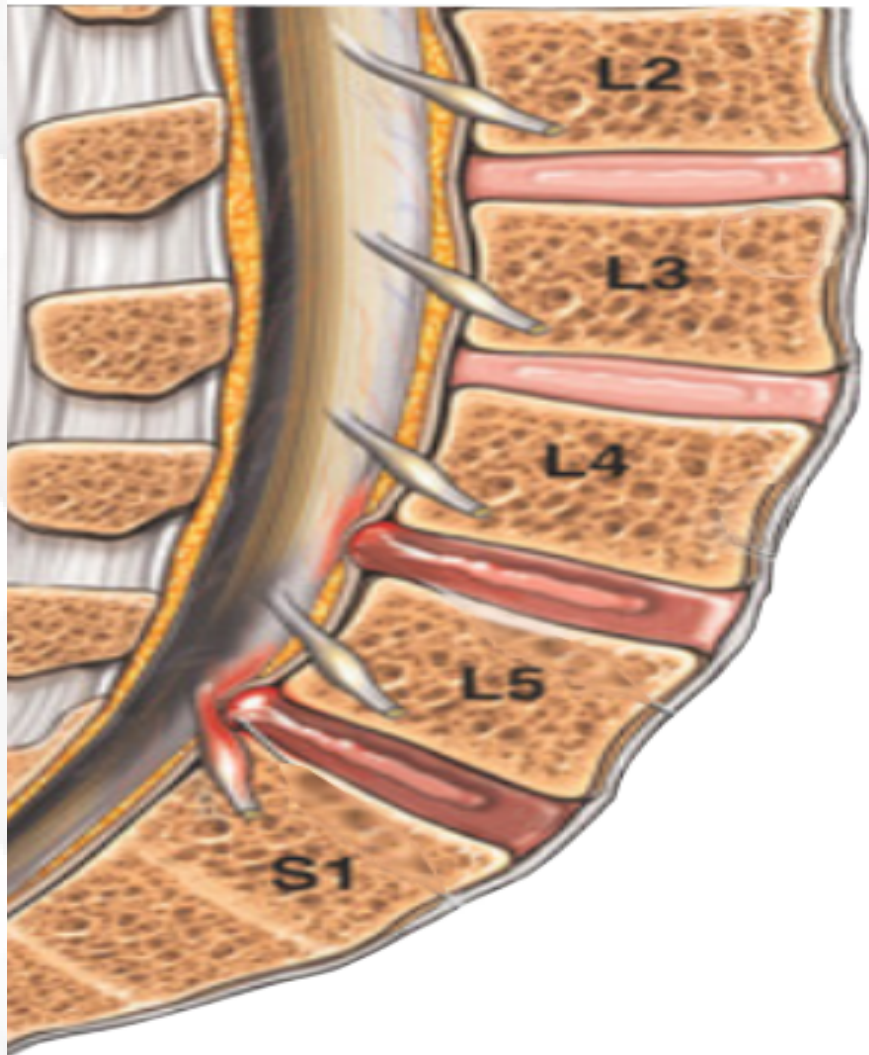


Lumbar Microdiscectomy



Patient Handout

Date: October 10, 2023

Contents

1	What is Lumbar Microdiscectomy?	2
2	Why is Lumbar Microdiscectomy Performed?	2
3	Procedure Overview	3
4	Benefits and Risks of Your Operation	3
4.1	Benefits Lumbar Microdiscectomy:	3
4.2	Risks of Not Undergoing the Operation:	4
4.3	Risks of Lumbar Microdiscectomy:	4
5	Expectations	5
5.1	In the Hospital	5
5.2	Recovery	5
5.3	Warning Signs After Surgery:	6
6	Note	6

1 What is Lumbar Microdiscectomy?

Lumbar Microdiscectomy is a surgical procedure performed on the lower back (lumbar spine) to address specific spinal conditions. In this procedure, a surgeon removes a portion of a herniated or damaged disc that may be compressing spinal nerves. The surgery aims to alleviate pain, numbness, and weakness caused by nerve compression.

2 Why is Lumbar Microdiscectomy Performed?

Lumbar Microdiscectomy is performed to treat various lumbar spine conditions and relieve pressure on spinal nerves. It is particularly effective for addressing herniated discs and their associated symptoms, such as leg pain or sciatica. Your surgeon will recommend a Lumbar Microdiscectomy based on your individual medical condition and symptoms.



Herniated Discs Compressing Spinal Nerves

3 Procedure Overview

During Lumbar Microdiscectomy, the surgeon accesses the lumbar spine through a small incision in the lower back. The key steps of the procedure include:

1. **Incision:** A small incision is made in the lower back to access the lumbar spine.
2. **Disc Removal:** The surgeon carefully removes the portion of the damaged or herniated disc that is pressing on the spinal nerve.
3. **Nerve Decompression:** By removing the disc fragment, pressure on the spinal nerve is relieved, alleviating pain and related symptoms.
4. **Closure:** The incision is closed with sutures and/or surgical glue.

4 Benefits and Risks of Your Operation

4.1 Benefits Lumbar Microdiscectomy:

Lumbar Microdiscectomy offers several potential benefits for your health and well-being, including:

- **Symptom Relief:** The surgery aims to alleviate leg pain, numbness, and weakness caused by nerve compression. You may experience significant relief from these discomforts by addressing the underlying issue.
- **Improved Function:** Successful Lumbar Microdiscectomy can enhance your lower back and leg function, allowing you to perform daily tasks and enjoy activities without pain.
- **Prevention of Further Damage:** By addressing the herniated disc, the surgery can prevent or reduce further nerve damage, possibly preventing long-term problems with pain, decreased movement, or sensation changes.
- **Enhanced Quality of Life:** Pain relief and restored mobility can lead to an improved quality of life, increased well-being, and better overall health.

Your surgeon will discuss how these potential benefits specifically apply to your individual medical condition and circumstances.

4.2 Risks of Not Undergoing the Operation:

Choosing not to undergo Lumbar Microdiscectomy surgery may have certain risks and consequences, that you should carefully consider:

- **Persistent Symptoms:** Some symptoms, such as those from nerve root irritation, often but not always improve on their own. Persistent symptoms could impact your comfort and ability to perform daily activities.
- **Irreversible Nerve Damage:** Ongoing nerve compression can lead to progressive symptoms that may be less likely to recover if left untreated.
- **Limited Mobility:** Untreated lumbar spine problems can limit lower back and leg mobility, affecting your ability to engage in various activities.
- **Reduced Quality of Life:** Persistent symptoms can diminish your overall quality of life, impacting daily enjoyment and participation in social and recreational activities.

4.3 Risks of Lumbar Microdiscectomy:

While Lumbar Microdiscectomy is generally safe, like any surgery, it carries potential risks and complications, including:

- **Transient Postoperative Dysesthesia:** You may experience temporary abnormal sensations like tingling or numbness near the surgical area, but these usually improve as you heal.
- **Recurrence/Reoperation:** There is a small chance that the disc problem could come back, requiring another surgery.
- **Dural Complications:** In rare cases, there may be a tear in the covering around the spinal cord, called the dura, which can lead to cerebrospinal fluid leakage. This might require additional procedures to fix and prevent a future infection.
- **Extensive Epidural Fibrosis:** Scar tissue formation around the nerves can occur but typically does not cause major problems.
- **Back Pain:** Some patients may experience temporary back pain, which usually improves with time and rehabilitation.
- **Nerve Root Damage:** There is a slight risk of nerve injury during surgery, which can lead to temporary or, rarely, long-term nerve-related symptoms, such as pain or weakness.
- **Deep or Superficial Wound Infection:** Occasionally, an infection can occur at the incision site, which might need to be treated with antibiotics or drainage.
- **Spondylodiscitis/Diskitis:** Rarely, there can be an infection in the spine or disc, which may require further surgeries.
- **Bleeding or Hematoma:** In rare cases, there may be bleeding or a collection of blood near the surgical area, which may need to be removed surgically to address pressure on the nerves.

-
- **Cauda Equina Syndrome:** In extremely rare instances, a condition called Cauda Equina Syndrome may occur, which requires immediate medical attention and can cause severe back pain, weakness, and bowel or bladder dysfunction.
 - **Other medical problems** such as sepsis, heart attack, pulmonary embolism, or stroke may happen.
 - **Death:** Although extremely rare, it's important to note that, like any surgery, there is a small risk of complications that can be life-threatening.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and there are other very rare complications that can be difficult to anticipate. It is crucial to have an open and thorough discussion with your healthcare provider to fully understand the potential risks and benefits of lumbar microdiscectomy surgery versus not undergoing the recommended procedure. Your surgeon can provide personalized guidance based on your medical condition and help you make an informed decision about your treatment options. If you have questions about any of these risks, it is important to discuss your concerns with your surgeon. It is also important to follow pre-operative and post-operative instructions diligently to minimize risks.

5 Expectations

5.1 In the Hospital

- You will be closely monitored by medical staff.
- Pain management will be provided.
- Physical therapy and mobility exercises may be started.
- Your surgeon will determine when you can be discharged based on your progress. Most patients either go home the same day or the morning after surgery. Occasionally, a longer stay is necessary.

5.2 Recovery

- Recovery times vary, but most patients return to normal activities gradually over several weeks.
- Temporary limitations may include avoiding heavy lifting, long time driving, and certain activities.
- Follow your surgeon's guidance for a smooth recovery process.

5.3 Warning Signs After Surgery:

- Redness or drainage at the incision site.
- Fever above 101 F.
- Severe leg weakness or numbness.
- Loss of bowel or bladder control.
- Swelling or pain in your legs.

6 Note

This handout only provides a general overview of Lumbar Microdiscectomy. Your healthcare team will provide personalized information and guidance based on your specific condition, comorbidities, and needs. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask your surgeon or medical provider.