

A light blue, stylized outline of a human figure, showing the head, neck, shoulders, and spine. The lines are thick and smooth, creating a minimalist silhouette.

**ABOUT YOUR
SPINE FUSION**



**NORTON
LEATHERMAN
SPINE CENTER**



ABOUT YOUR SPINE FUSION

Considering having back surgery is a complex decision that requires much thought and detailed information regarding your surgery.

Your physician has reviewed your history, performed a physical exam, and diagnostic tests may have been ordered. All of this information combined creates your complex, individual medical history and can assist you and your physician in making the right decisions regarding your treatment.

One of the main goals of any surgical procedure performed on the skeletal system is to provide pain relief to joints that are degenerative, or “worn out.” One of the best ways to provide pain relief to a joint is to immobilize it, or fuse it together. A fusion is an operation in which two bones, usually separated by a joint, are surgically joined together or fused into one bone.

Before Your Surgery

You will be called when your surgery has been scheduled, and also will receive a letter in the mail. Included in the letter will be the date and time for pre-admission testing if it is to be performed at the hospital. You also may be requested to visit your family doctor to have lab work or other outpatient testing performed. Please read the letter carefully and attend all scheduled appointments. Failure to attend pre-surgical clearance appointments may lead to the cancellation of your surgery. You also will receive a letter regarding blood donation if that step is needed. Please call the Surgery Scheduling Department after you have received this letter if you have any questions.

The Day of Surgery

You will need to register at Outpatient Registration one-and-a-half hours before your scheduled surgery time. After completing paperwork, you will be escorted to the holding area, where an intravenous (IV) line will be started and you will be asked to change your clothes. Also during this time, you may be visited by your physician and/or an anesthesiologist. One or two people may wait with you during this period. When you are taken into the operating room, your family will be asked to wait in the surgery waiting area.



During Surgery

Your surgery may last from four to eight hours, depending on the type of procedure you are having done. Spine instrumentation (medical devices) may be used to enhance the fusion rate. The purpose of the instrumentation is to hold the area of the back very still while the bone becomes solid. Patients who have spinal instrumentation implanted are known to return to their daily activities faster, due to shorter hospital stays and a more rapid recovery period.

You may be having a posterior fusion (an incision is made in your back), an anterior fusion (an incision is made in your side or abdomen), or a combination of both. This will be decided and discussed with you by your physician.

If possible, your physician will use a bone graft as the fusion material. There are two purposes of using bone graft:

- 1) To stimulate the bone to heal.
- 2) To provide support to the skeleton by filling in gaps between two bones.

The bone graft is usually taken from the back of your iliac crest or your hip area. The use of bone graft during your surgery is to stimulate healing. When the bone is crushed into a powder, the chemicals in the crushed bone stimulate the bone to heal. If the bone is taken from your body, in a process called autograft, it may still have living cells in it that survive after being transplanted to the new location and will continue to help create new bone. Bone taken from someone else, in a process called allograft, will stimulate bone growth but will not have living bone cells. Allograft is usually taken from organ donors whose bone graft has been placed in a bone bank, where it is treated and tested.

John R. Johnson, M.D.

Steven D. Glassman, M.D.

Rolando M. Puno, M.D.

John R. Dimar II, M.D.

Mitchell J. Campbell, M.D.

Mladen Djurasovic, M.D.

Charles H. Crawford III, M.D.



**NORTON
LEATHERMAN
SPINE CENTER**

210 East Gray Street, Suite 900

Louisville, KY 40202

(502) **584-7525**

(502) 584-6851 Fax

SpineMDs.com

NortonLeatherman.com