

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.

DISC HERNIATION OR BULGED DISC



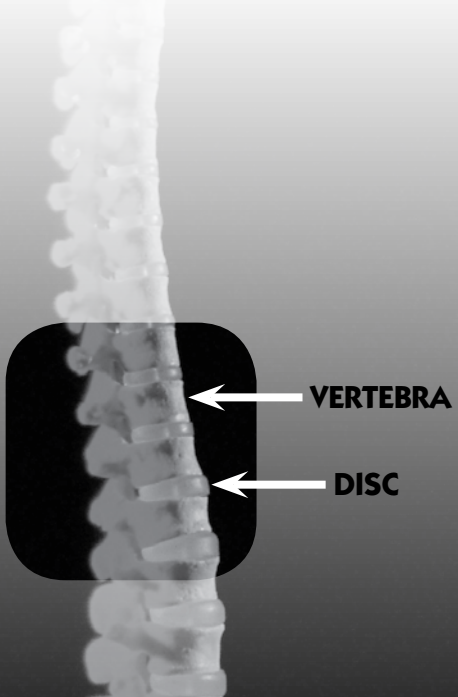
**NORTON
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Although the medical term is Herniated Nucleus Pulposus, or HNP, the terms ruptured disc, bulged disc and slipped disc are used very frequently to describe a back problem. While many people have back problems, these conditions are not necessarily an HNP.

Discs can become herniated for a wide range of reasons. Discs can rupture suddenly – sometimes with very little force placed on the disc. If the force of the fall is strong enough, either the spine may fracture or the disc can rupture. Bending over and lifting both place a great deal of stress on the intervertebral spaces, which can also cause the disc to rupture.



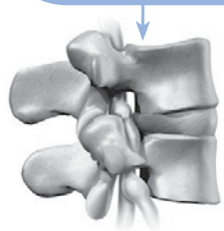
This brochure is not a substitute for medical care. It has been developed by your physician to help you better understand your spine condition, surgery and post-operative instructions. Please be advised that the statements made within this brochure are intended for general information use only. Your condition or course of treatment may vary. Please check with your physician for variances.



A herniated disc occurs when the outer fibers of the disc (the annulus) are damaged and the soft inner material ruptures out of its normal shape and space. If the outer layer tears near the spinal canal, the nucleus pulposus material can bulge into the spinal canal area.

The disc in-between the vertebral bodies is a gel-like cushion that acts like a shock absorber between each of the vertebra. The discs allow the back to bend and flex. The function of the disc is to provide flexibility while still providing strength.

There is one disc between each vertebra. Each disc has a strong outer ring, called the annulus, and a soft, jelly-like center, called the nucleus pulposus. The annulus is the strongest area of the disc.



Discs have high water content and, as people age, the water content decreases. This causes the disc to shrink and become less flexible, and the space between the vertebrae to become more narrow.

The symptoms of a true herniated disc may not always include back pain. The symptoms of a herniated disc originate from pressure on and irritation of the nerves. The symptoms usually include pain and/or numbness and tingling into one or both legs. A person may also experience muscle weakness and a loss of reflexes.

The treatment of a herniated disc can range from bed rest during acute episodes, to medications, injections and surgical treatment.



Diagnosis cannot be confirmed through a plain X-ray, because this only shows bony material and a herniated disc is a problem concerning soft tissue. However, plain X-rays are important because they will give your physician an idea of the wear and tear on your spine.

The most common test to diagnose a herniated disc is an MRI scan, a painless test that is usually very accurate.

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