

Vertebral Herniated Disc, Continued...

Symptoms of a herniated lumbar disc may often be difficult to distinguish from those of other spinal disorders or simple back muscular strain.

To effectively manage this disorder, it is important that a complete medical history and physical examination be performed by your physician.

Symptoms of muscle weakness, numbness, tingling, or shock-like pain can be a result of numerous causes and are not limited to disc herniations.

If you experience similar symptoms to those explained in this brochure, see your health care provider for examination and treatment options.

This brochure is compliments of
Advanced Physical Therapy & Health Services

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ADVANCED PHYSICAL THERAPY & HEALTH SERVICES, LLC

is a private, physical therapist-owned outpatient physical therapy clinic specializing in neurologic, orthopedic, and vestibular conditions.

All patients are evaluated by a licensed physical therapist.

We guarantee to see you for an initial evaluation in 24-48 hours.

We have early morning and late evening hours for convenient scheduling.

We accept and are in-network with most insurance companies, including PPO's, HMO's, Medicare, Tricare, and Workers' Compensation.

Conditions we evaluate and treat include, but are not limited to:

- Neck & back injuries/pain
- Arthritis
- Vertigo
- Sprains/Strains
- Parkinson's Disease
- Fractures
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Tendonitis
- Gait & balance disorders
- Bursitis
- Peripheral neuropathy
- Stroke
- Sports injuries
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Work-related injuries
- TMJ disorder/pain
- Nerve injuries / disorders
- Joint replacements
- Cervicogenic headaches
- Orthopedic surgeries

Information on Herniated Discs



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Vertebral Disk Herniation

THE SPINE & VERTEBRAL DISCS:

The spine consists of 24 vertebrae from the skull down to the tailbone. Each vertebra is cushioned by a spinal disc that lies in between the vertebrae and aids as a shock absorber, distributing forces throughout the spinal column. Each disc is made up of outer rings of tissue (annulus fibrosis) and a jelly-like substance in the center (nucleus pulposus). As a person normally ages, the disc gradually loses elasticity and is more vulnerable to injury and inability to withhold the jelly-like substance. The disc changes volume and shape over time.

A **herniated disc** occurs when the nucleus pulposus pushes through the outer fibers and causes a disc “bulge”. This bulge can progress to outside of the vertebrae, pressing onto the spinal nerves and/or spinal cord.



SYMPTOMS THAT MIGHT OCCUR WITH A HERNIATED DISC:

Neck (cervical) herniations can cause symptoms into your arms; low back (lumbar) herniations can cause symptoms down into your buttocks/legs. Symptoms can include shock-like pain, tingling, numbness, and/or muscle weakness. Changes in bowel or bladder function may be a sign of cauda equina syndrome. ***This is a medical emergency and you should see your doctor immediately if you have problems with urinating, bowel movements, or if you have numbness around your genitals.***

EXAMINATION:

If a doctor suspects a herniated disc, testing may include assessment of sensation, muscle strength, and reflexes.



MRI: Normally an MRI of the lumbar spine will show abnormalities and signs of disc-wear as a person ages. Because of normal disc-wear shown on a typical MRI, its findings are used in conjunction with other significant exam findings to indicate a herniated disc.

TREATMENT:

Your treatment plan for a herniated disc may include pain control, exercise, and physical therapy.

Pain control: Initially your doctor may request that you decrease activity, may prescribe or recommend anti-inflammatory medications, cold/heat therapy, and/or bracing for short-term relief. Bracing helps to decrease spinal motion, decreases pressure within the disc, and keeps the back warm; however, long term use can weaken the abdominal and back muscles and is not recommended. When indicated, epidural injections may be an option, or surgery.

Physical Therapy and Exercise: A physical therapist can work with you to put together an individual exercise program to meet your specific needs. Exercises may include stretching, postural exercises, back and abdominal exercises, and aerobic exercises such as walking, biking, swimming, and/or the elliptical machine.



A physical therapist may also use manual techniques or other treatment modalities, such as electrical stimulation, ultrasound, or hot/cold packs, to help relieve your symptoms and assist return to normal activities.



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