

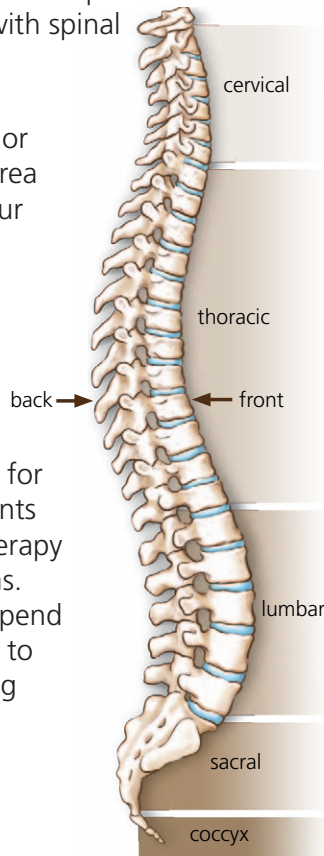
Q What else do I need to know?

A Spinal decompression and spinal fusion are two common surgical procedures that can be performed using a minimally invasive surgical approach.

- In **spinal decompression**, bone and/or disc material, which are pressing on the nerve roots of your spine and causing pain, are removed.
- In **spinal fusion surgery**, two vertebral bones are fused together. Implants are used to keep the vertebral bones in place and prevent painful movement. This procedure is often done along with spinal decompression.

If there are problems or access to the spinal area is not clear during your minimally invasive surgery, the surgeon may decide that a traditional approach is necessary.

During recovery, you will see your surgeon for follow-up appointments and start physical therapy and exercise programs. Recovery time will depend on your body's ability to heal and varies among patients.



Spine

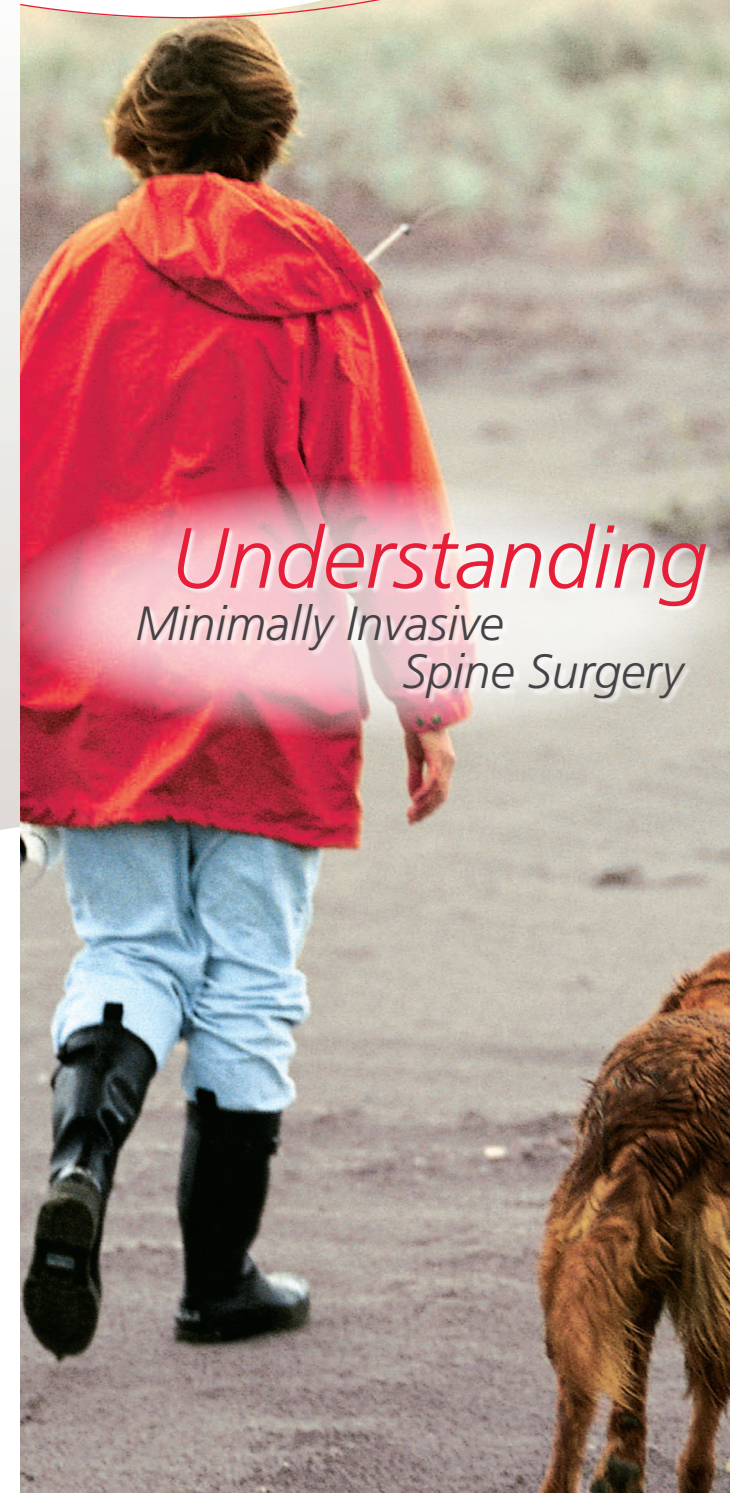
For more information go to:

www.AllAboutBackandNeckPain.com

As your doctor, I look forward to answering any questions you have about your back and neck.


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Understanding Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery

Q *How can I be prepared?*

A Minimally invasive spine surgery is an exciting new option that may help relieve chronic back and/or leg pain. Your surgeon is most qualified to advise you, answer your questions, and set reasonable expectations about your care. The decision to have surgery requires careful thought. Read this brochure to answer your basic questions. Then write down other questions and decide with your surgeon if minimally invasive spine surgery is the right option for you.

Q *What causes back or leg pain?*

A Certain conditions of the spine, such as a damaged disc or other mechanical problems, can cause chronic lower back or leg pain. Some conditions are a normal part of aging. Others may begin, or be worsened, by an injury. Not all people with back or leg pain have the same symptoms.

Check off all of the following problems that you have:

- Low back pain
- Leg or buttock pain
- Numbness
- Tingling
- Weakness or loss of feeling in one or both legs
- Pain that worsens when sitting, bending, lifting, or twisting

Q *What makes minimally invasive surgery different?*

A Traditional spine surgery usually requires long incisions in the back. Muscles are cut and moved away from the spine to give access to the area.

Minimally invasive spine surgery is performed through small incisions in the back. Surgeons use special instruments, such as intraoperative X-ray, microscopes, and tubular retractors.

Both types of surgery aim to relieve back or leg pain. However, minimally invasive spine surgery strives to cut as little muscle as possible.

TERMS TO KNOW

- **Spinal decompression** — surgery to relieve pressure on the spinal cord.
- **Spinal fusion** — surgery done by an orthopedic surgeon or neurosurgeon that joins together two or more vertebral bones to stabilize the spine. This procedure is also known as spondylosyndesis.

Minimally invasive surgery has many advantages* over traditional spine surgery

- Smaller incisions
- Less surgical blood loss
- Smaller scars
- Shorter hospital stay
- Less pain and pain medicine during recovery
- Faster return to work and daily activities

*As compared to traditional spine surgery.

Q *What are the benefits and the risks?*

A Each patient is unique, so no two will respond exactly the same way. Minimally invasive surgery is often used for many operations, such as gall bladder and appendix removal, as well as total hip replacement. It has recently been applied to surgeries of the spine, including spinal decompression and spinal fusion.

Minimally invasive spine surgery carries the same risks as any general surgery. Complications such as infection, pain, and nerve damage can occur. Talk with your surgeon to make sure you understand the risks and benefits of the minimally invasive spine treatment recommended for you.