

Recurrent Back Pain After a Herniated Disc Removal



One reason back surgery “fails” is that the area operated on was not, in fact, the area causing the pain. Because the back and its nerves are so complex, this often cannot be foreseen before surgery. In fact, back surgery more commonly alleviates leg pain than back pain, because it is easier to trace leg pain to a specific herniated disc pressing on a nerve, such as the sciatic nerve.

Many patients with chronic back pain suffer from additional health problems, such as a separate chronic pain issue or chronic illness, which back surgery does not address, so a patient can still feel subpar after surgery. Furthermore, the longer back pain has existed, the less likely surgery is to eliminate it.

Newly formed scar tissue could be causing your back problem if it is pressing on the lumbar nerve root. Less common, though possible, is that bleeding, infection, nerve injury or a reupturing of the disc is causing the pain.

If you continue to experience back pain after surgery, there are several things you should do.

- **Discuss the pain as specifically as possible with your surgeon. If your surgeon can pinpoint why the pain exists (probably with the help of imaging tests), he or she can best recommend a potential solution.**
- **Driving, bending or lifting heavy objects too soon after surgery (before four weeks) could cause you to experience pain. Consult us to determine how you might alleviate pain and better structure your postoperative rehabilitation.**

Together with your doctor, we can devise a stretching, strengthening and exercise plan to help your recovery and, hopefully, minimize future discomfort.