

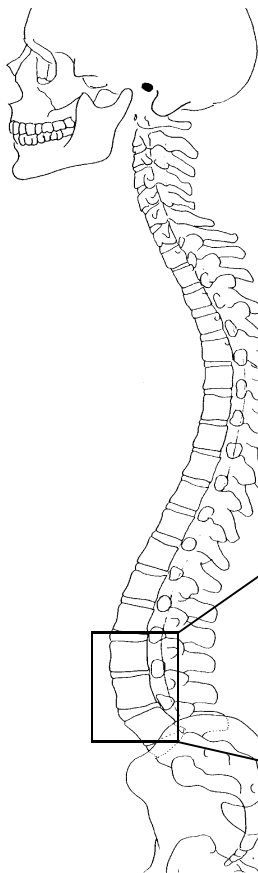
SHIRLEY RD CHIROPRACTIC

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What is a Disc and why does it 'slip?'

The human spine includes 24 bones (vertebrae) each separated by a spongy, jelly filled sac, known as an intervertebral disc. Normally, before the age of 30, the discs are very strong and forgiving, so that trauma to your spine (poor posture, car accidents, falls, sports etc.) will damage the spinal joints, rather than the discs. Some people have genetically weaker discs, however any prolonged wear and tear takes its toll on the disc structure.



One of the first changes to take place is deterioration of the disc's jelly-like center (the nucleus pulposus). The resilient fluid-filled disc becomes dry, replaced by coarse collagen fibers. The 'drying' of the disc causes it to become saggy and less supportive.

Healthy
Intervertebral Disc



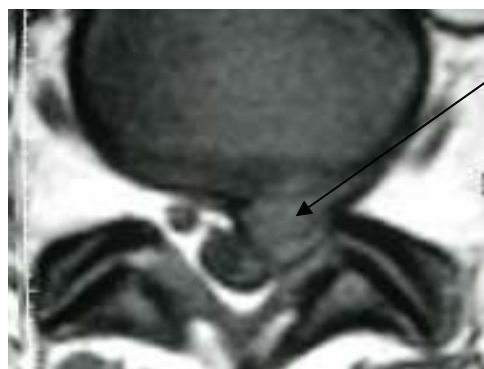
Spinal
joints



- As the disc sags, the cartilage plates of the two vertebrae get closer to each other. This causes the disc to bulge. If this process is allowed to continue, further damage occurs.
- Normally, the disc acts as a supportive shock absorber for the spine. However, the degenerative changes that

occur as a result of the loss of pressure within the disc promote instability of the spinal joints.

- The instability allows a greater amount of uncontrolled movement to occur in the joints of the spine. This leads to more thinning and eventually bulging of the disc.



Disc protrusion

- Your body weight is no longer supported by the centre of the disc but instead the by walls of the sac (annulus fibrosis.)
- The thinner and weaker a disc becomes the greater the chance of a disc protrusion. This process is commonly referred to in the media as a "slipped disc".
- Increased tension on the annulus leads to bony spurs forming on the edges of the vertebrae in an attempt to stabilize the spine.
- If the disc is allowed to bulge far enough it will protrude into the space where the spinal cord and nerves lie. Pressure on the neural tissue, by the disc, results in symptoms ranging from a mild ache to severe sciatic (leg) pain.
- The severity of the symptom is not always a good indication of the state of the disc. The mild backache that you experience from time to time may be as a result of a thinning disc or a tearing annulus fibrosis.

Medical and chiropractic authorities now agree that the treatment of back and/or leg pain from disc herniation by skilled manipulation is both safe and effective, and that disc herniation should now be seen primarily as a non-surgical disease to be treated by conservative methods.

Preventing Spinal Degeneration

- The majority of our spinal problems accumulate after repeatedly subjecting our spine to damaging compression, twisting and bending forces over a number of years.
- Whilst we have been conditioned to brush our teeth regularly for the prevention of tooth decay, no one ever taught us how to maintain a healthy, mobile spine.
- Those who have, or have had, a spinal disc problem should be advised that conscious daily attention to spinal care will be essential to halt or reverse the effects of creeping degeneration.

In the acute phase or when you are experiencing pain:

Avoid

- Postures or positions which aggravate
- Sitting for long periods and long drives
- Bending forwards
- Twisting movements
- Excessive bedrest (unless unavoidable)

Try

- Keeping mobile where possible (short walks only)
- Lying on your back with legs bent or resting on a chair to help reduce pain and nerve pressure
- Sitting on straight back chairs rather than "lounges"
- Sleeping with a pillow between your knees on your side or on your back with a pillow under the knees

- For further information regarding disc injuries and protrusions, and references for the above material, please visit our website.

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