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Lumbar Discectomy

1 message

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Wed, Aug 2, 2023 at 8:28 PM

Lumbar Discectomy

Discectomy is a surgical procedure performed to treat lumbar disc herniation and stenosis, which can cause lower back pain, leg pain, and other neurological symptoms. Let's discuss these conditions and how discectomy can help.

Lumbar Disc Herniation:

A lumbar disc herniation occurs when the outer layer of a spinal disc in the lower back tears, allowing the inner jelly-like substance (nucleus pulposus) to protrude or leak out. This can put pressure on nearby nerves, leading to pain, numbness, and weakness in the lower back, buttocks, and legs.

Discectomy for Disc Herniation:

A discectomy removes a portion of the herniated disc to relieve pressure on the affected nerve roots. The procedure aims to alleviate symptoms and promote the healing process. There are different approaches to discectomy:

1. **Open Discectomy:** This traditional approach involves making a larger incision in the back, allowing direct visualization of the affected disc. The surgeon removes the herniated portion of the disc, sometimes trimming or removing a small part of the adjacent lamina or vertebral bone if necessary. Open discectomy provides good access to the disc but requires longer recovery time.
2. **Microdiscectomy:** This minimally invasive technique utilizes specialized instruments and a smaller incision. The surgeon uses magnification and microscopic visualization to remove the herniated disc material while minimizing disruption to surrounding tissues. Microdiscectomy offers benefits such as shorter hospital stays, less postoperative pain, and faster recovery compared to open discectomy.

Lumbar Stenosis:

Lumbar stenosis refers to the narrowing of the spinal canal in the lower back, which can compress the spinal cord or nerve roots. The narrowing may occur due to various factors, including thickened ligaments, bony growths (bone spurs), or structural changes in the intervertebral discs.

Discectomy for Stenosis:

Discectomy can be an effective treatment for lumbar stenosis when the primary cause involves a herniated disc. In such cases, removing the herniated portion of the disc can help relieve pressure on the affected nerves and alleviate symptoms. However, if the stenosis is mainly caused by other factors such as bone spurs or ligament thickening, additional procedures like laminectomy or spinal fusion may be necessary to address the underlying cause and provide stability to the spine.

It's crucial to note that not all cases of lumbar disc herniation or stenosis require surgical intervention. Conservative treatments like medication, physical therapy, and epidural injections are often attempted first. Surgery is generally considered if conservative measures fail to alleviate symptoms or if there are severe neurological deficits or persistent pain.

The decision to undergo discectomy or any surgical procedure should be made in consultation with a spine specialist, who will thoroughly evaluate the individual case and recommend the most appropriate treatment approach.

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