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DISC HERNIATION W RADICULOPATHY

What is a disc?

A disc is the connective tissue between the body of each vertebrae. The disc is comprised of the outer, concentric rings of angled, cartilage called the annulus fibrosis and the inner, gel-like substance known as the nucleus pulposus. Your discs have a lot of fluid in them, even more so when you first wake up. A disc has innervation, meaning damage to it can be painful. Rotation, flexion, and Valsalva (intra-abdominal pressure) can stress the discs leading to tears slowly making their way through the layers of annulus fibrosis, eventually bulging and even herniating.

What is the most current clinical definition of disc herniation?

"Localized displacement of disc material beyond the normal margins of the intervertebral disc space resulting in pain, weakness, or numbness in a myotomal or dermatomal distribution" (Kreiner, 2014)

What clinical testing and examination findings are consistent with disc herniation?

Typical manual testing, sensory testing, supine straight leg raise (over seated) as well as passive SLR and crossed passive SLR results in positives with disc herniation.

What imaging is the best to show disc herniation?

MRI is the preference for showing disc herniation, although if MR is not permitted, CT is the next choice for noninvasive imaging.

Can exercise work along?

There is currently not enough evidence to say whether structured exercise alone can treat disc herniation. For mild to moderate cases, a course of conservative care including structured exercise is recommended.

Do adjustments or spinal manipulation help?

According to the literature, spinal manipulation is an option for symptomatic relief with disc herniation. This relief may also allow for a window of structured exercise to be tolerated.

Does traction, acupuncture, or laser help?

According to the literature, there is not enough evidence to support for or against traction, acupuncture or laser.

What are some positive prognostic factors?

Being under 40 years of age or having symptoms for less than 3 months are both positive prognostic factors.

What is sciatica?

Sciatica is numbness, tingling, or pain that travels down the back of the leg.

Will my pain go away?

Although duration can differ between patients, back and leg pain can last for months. Seeking treatment may help relieve your pain, helping you return to activities you love. Continue day-to-day activities even with some pain (within reason).