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URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/herniateddisk.html>

Herniated Disk

Also called: Bulging disk, Compressed disk, Herniated intervertebral disk, Herniated nucleus pulposus, Prolapsed disk, Ruptured disk, Slipped disk

Your backbone, or spine, is made up of 26 bones called vertebrae. In between them are soft disks filled with a jelly-like substance. These disks cushion the vertebrae and keep them in place. As you age, the disks break down or degenerate. As they do, they lose their cushioning ability. This can lead to pain if the back is stressed.

A herniated disk is a disk that ruptures. This allows the jelly-like center of the disk to leak, irritating the nearby nerves. This can cause sciatica [<https://medlineplus.gov/sciatica.html>] or back pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/backpain.html>] .

Your doctor will diagnose a herniated disk with a physical exam and, sometimes, imaging tests. With treatment, most people recover. Treatments include rest, pain and anti-inflammatory medicines, physical therapy, and sometimes surgery.

NIH: National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

Start Here

- **Herniated Disk** [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/herniated-disc/>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/hernia-de-disco/?adfree=true>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- **Computed Tomography (CT) – Spine** [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info.cfm?pg=spinect>]
(American College of Radiology, Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/sp/info.cfm?pg=spinect>]
- **Discography (Discogram)** [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info.cfm?pg=discography>]
(American College of Radiology, Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/sp/info.cfm?pg=discography>]
- **Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) – Spine** [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info.cfm?pg=spinemr>]
(American College of Radiology, Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/sp/info.cfm?pg=spinemr>]
- **Radiographic Assessment for Back Pain** [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Treatments/Assessment-Tools/Radiographic-Assessment-Back-Pain>] (North American Spine Society)

Treatments and Therapies

- **Artificial Disc Replacement** [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Treatments/Surgical-Options/Artificial-Disc-Replacement>] (North American Spine Society)
- **Epidural Injections for Spinal Pain** [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info.cfm?PG=epidural>]
(American College of Radiology, Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/sp/info.cfm?PG=epidural>]

- **Laparoscopic Spine Surgery** [<https://www.sages.org/wiki/laparoscopic-spine-surgery/>]
(Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons)
- **Lumbar (Open) Microscopic Discectomy** [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Treatments/Surgical-Options/Lumbar-Microscopic-Discectomy>] (North American Spine Society)
- **Spinal Fusion** [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Treatments/Surgical-Options/Spinal-Fusion>]
(North American Spine Society)


Related Issues

- **Cauda Equina Syndrome** [<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/cauda-equina-syndrome>]
(American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons)
- **Cervical Radiculopathy (Pinched Nerve)** [<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/cervical-radiculopathy-pinched-nerve/>] (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons)

Specifics

- **Herniated Cervical Disc** [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Conditions/Degenerative-Conditions/Herniated-Cervical-Disc>] (North American Spine Society)
- **Herniated Disk in the Lower Back** [<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/herniated-disk-in-the-lower-back/>] (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons) – **PDF**
- **Herniated Lumbar Disc** [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Conditions/Degenerative-Conditions/Herniated-Lumbar-Disc>] (North American Spine Society)


Genetics

- **intervertebral disc disease: MedlinePlus Genetics** [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/intervertebral-disc-disease>]
 (National Library of Medicine)


Images

- **Lumbar spinal surgery – slideshow** [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100119_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100119_1.htm]
- **Spinal fusion – slideshow** [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100121_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100121_1.htm]
- **Spinal surgery -- cervical – slideshow** [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100133_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100133_1.htm]

Videos and Tutorials

- **Herniated nucleus pulposus (slipped disk)** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000069.htm>]
 (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/anatomyvideos/000069.htm>]

Clinical Trials

- **ClinicalTrials.gov: Intervertebral Disc Displacement**
[<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open/condition=%22Intervertebral+Disk+Displacement%22>]
 (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)


- **Article: The effectiveness of percutaneous injections of ozonotherapy in low back pain.**
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/32935812>]
- **Article: Comparison of surgical outcomes of lumbar disc herniation using local anesthesia...**
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/32871967>]

- Article: Comparison of total disc arthroplasty and fusion in treatment of lumbar...
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/32871957>]
- Herniated Disk -- see more articles [[https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=intervertebral+disc+displacement\[majr\]+AND+english\[la\]+AND+humans\[mh\]+NOT+\(letter\[pt\]+OR+editorial\[pt\]+OR+case+reports\[pt\]\)+AND+%22last+1+Year%22\[edat\]](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=intervertebral+disc+displacement[majr]+AND+english[la]+AND+humans[mh]+NOT+(letter[pt]+OR+editorial[pt]+OR+case+reports[pt])+AND+%22last+1+Year%22[edat])]

Reference Desk

- Definitions A-Z [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Resources/Definitions>] (North American Spine Society)

Find an Expert

- **National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases** [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/>] 
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/es/portal-en-espanol>]

Patient Handouts

- Herniated disk [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000442.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000442.htm>]
- Spinal fusion [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002968.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002968.htm>]
- Spine surgery – discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000313.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000313.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Bone graft – slideshow [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100136_1.htm]
- Disk replacement – lumbar spine [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007745.htm>]
- Herniated disk [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000442.htm>]
- Herniated nucleus pulposus (slipped disk) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000069.htm>]
- Lumbar MRI scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007352.htm>]
- Lumbar spinal surgery – slideshow [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100119_1.htm]
- Lumbar Spine CT scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007350.htm>]
- Lumbosacral spine CT [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003787.htm>]
- Lumbosacral spine x-ray [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003807.htm>]
- Microdiscectomy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007250.htm>]
- Microdiscectomy – slideshow [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100224_1.htm]
- Spinal fusion [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002968.htm>]

Spinal fusion – slideshow [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100121_1.htm]

Spinal surgery -- cervical – slideshow [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100133_1.htm]

Spine surgery – discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000313.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Back Pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/backpain.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Herniated Disk* is the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases [<http://www.niams.nih.gov/>]

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