



METRx™ MicroDiscectomy System

Minimally Invasive Herniated Disc Repair

Annually, more than 250,000 Americans undergo surgery to remove or repair herniated discs, a leading cause of back pain. While this type of operation eventually can improve function, recovery time has traditionally proven to be painful and last several weeks.

METRx™ MicroDiscectomy System is a less invasive option for back surgery. This new technology allows surgeons to repair herniated discs by viewing the affected nerves through a narrow tube inserted into a small 14-millimeter incision in the patient's back. By dilating the muscle, surgeons can displace the tissue around the area that needs repair and safely remove the herniated disc fragments without cutting any muscle.

The METRx System was designed to provide spine surgeons with a way of removing herniated intervertebral discs in the lumbar spine that put pressure on the spinal nerve roots and cause pain. Herniated discs occur because the discs that act as shock absorbers between the bones of the spinal column become stiff and less flexible with age. Discs that lose their flexibility can rupture and cause neck pain and back pain. A part of the disc can herniate or leak out through a tear in the ligaments that surround the disc, pressing on the spinal cord or on the nerves that travel out to the arms and legs.

A herniated disc can be responsible for a pain felt in the neck or back. The pressure the herniated disc puts on the spinal cord or the nerve roots can cause pain or weakness in the arms or legs and sometimes can even cause problems with the way the spinal cord normally functions. If a herniated disc is pinching a nerve in the neck, most people will have persistent neck pain, often with numbness in the arms and hands. If a herniated disc is pinching a nerve in the lower back, then most people will have persistent low back and buttock pain, with numbness and tingling in the legs and feet.

Surgery helps alleviate the problems associated with a herniated disc. Traditional back surgery requires much larger incisions that not only induce more pain, but make it necessary for patients to stay in the hospital longer. However, patients who undergo back surgery with using the METRx System have found the process much less traumatic. With METRx, surgeons locate, view and repair a herniated disc using incisions smaller than an inch; in fact, many patients walk out of the hospital the same day and use nothing stronger than Tylenol™ for pain relief.

According to the physicians, this approach to back surgery also eases rehabilitation and physical therapy following surgery because less damage is done to surrounding muscles, and so consequently less scar tissue forms.