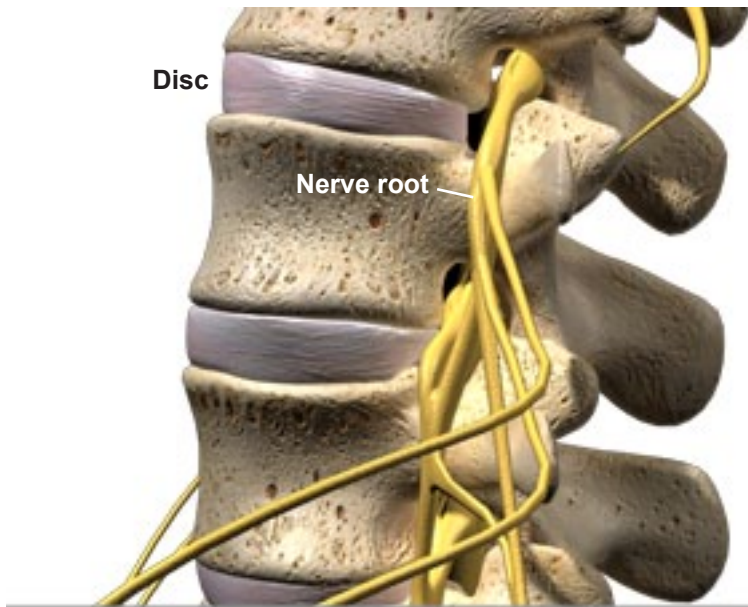
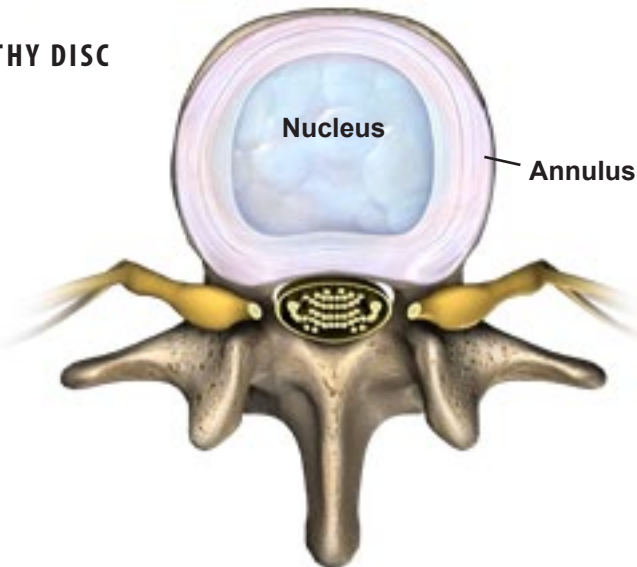


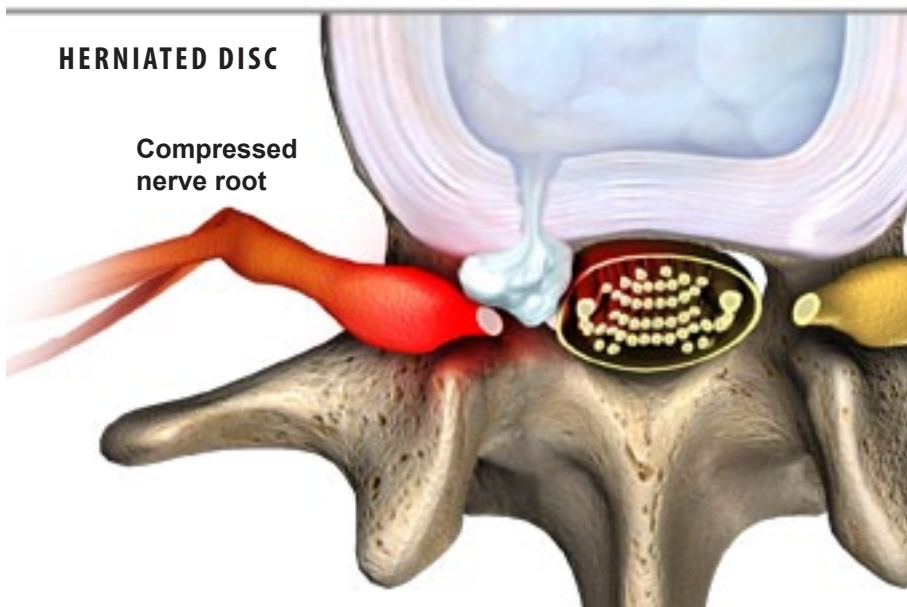
Herniated Discs



HEALTHY DISC



HERNIATED DISC



Overview

A herniated disc is a common injury that can affect any part of the spine. A herniated disc can cause severe pain and other problems in the arms or legs.

Disc Anatomy

Vertebral discs are flexible, rubbery cushions that support the vertebral bones. They allow the spine to twist and bend. Each disc has a soft inner nucleus that is surrounded by a fibrous outer wall.

Herniated Disc

A herniated disc occurs when the nucleus pushes through the outer wall. This herniation can result in a large bulge that can press against nearby nerve roots.

Causes

Herniated discs commonly result from age-related weakening of the spinal discs. This is called disc degeneration, and it can occur gradually over many years as a result of normal wear and tear on the spine. A herniated disc can also result from a traumatic injury, or from lifting a heavy object improperly.

Symptoms

Symptoms of a herniated disc vary depending on the location of the disc and the severity of the rupture. Some herniated discs cause no symptoms, and a person with this type of injury may not realize the disc is damaged. But a herniated disc can also cause severe pain, numbness or tingling, and weakness. Most herniated discs occur in the lower back, where they can cause symptoms in the buttocks, legs and feet. Herniated discs also occur in the neck, where they can cause symptoms in the shoulders, arms and hands.

Treatment

Treatment options for herniated disc depend on the location and severity of the injury. A herniated disc may be treated with pain-relieving medications, muscle relaxers and corticosteroid injections. A person with a herniated disc may benefit from physical therapy. If these methods are not effective, the disc may need to be treated with a surgical procedure.