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Lumbar Foraminotomy

WHAT DOES THE SURGERY INVOLVE?

- This surgery is done to take pressures off of nerves in the lower back that are being compressed in the foramen (the opening between the bones the nerves exit through). Surgery is done from the back, through an incision that is 1.5 inches. Dr. Hoel takes pressure off of the nerves by removing bone that is pressing on the nerve.

WHAT ARE SOME REASONS FOR WHICH THIS PROCEDURE IS DONE?

- This surgery is done to take pressure off of nerves being compressed by arthritic changes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SURGERY:

- This surgery is done under general anesthesia (fully asleep). Usually Dr. Hoel does this through a tube that is less than an inch in diameter. The tube works by spreading apart the muscle, rather than cutting the muscle, which helps promote a faster recovery after surgery.
- This tube is placed on the back of the bones that are compressing the nerves. Dr. Hoel then shaves down a nonessential portion of the bone which has arthritic changes causing compression of the nerve. After completing this, the tube is removed and a steri-strip is placed over the incision site.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING RECOVERY FROM SURGERY:

- Most patients go home the same day. Many patients notice a very rapid relief of their leg pain which was present before the operation, though there are some patients for whom the relief can take a few weeks.
- You will notice some soreness around the surgical site from surgery, but this should fade over two weeks or so. Some patients note rapid relief of their nerve-related pain in the legs, but for others it may take a couple of weeks. Numbness and weakness symptoms can take a longer time to resolve, sometimes taking weeks or months.
- Dr Hoel will ask you to restrict yourself to lifting <10 lbs, with no excessive bending or twisting in the first six weeks after the operation.

WHAT CHANGES IN FUNCTION SHOULD I EXPECT AFTER I RECOVER FROM SURGERY?

- You will not have any restrictions of motion after you recover from this surgery. Most people find their walking tolerance is much better after recovering from this surgery.