



**Nathan Wanderman, MD**

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## Anterior Cervical Disc Replacement

### WHAT IS THE SURGERY?

- Dr. Wanderman makes a small horizontal incision on the front of the neck. Whenever possible he will place the incision in one of the natural skin folds of your neck to try to hide the surgical scar. He then gently moves the trachea (windpipe) and esophagus (eating tube) to the side to get to the spine.
- Dr. Wanderman then removes the affected disc(s) and bone spurs to take the pressure off of the spinal cord and/or nerves to the arms.
- After that Dr. Wanderman places a disc replacement where the disc used to be, allowing that level to continue to move like it did before.

### WHY A DISC REPLACEMENT INSTEAD OF A FUSION?

- This surgery is great for patients with a large disc herniation and no arthritis.
- If you have arthritis in your neck already, a fusion is usually the better option. The goal of a disc replacement is to allow the affected level to continue to move. If that level already has arthritis, the arthritis will reaccumulate with a disc replacement, increasing the risk of a reoperation.

### WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

- You may wake up with a small drain tube coming from your incision (if one is placed, the drain will be removed the following day).
- Most people have a sore throat and a “lump” sensation in their throat when they wake up, this usually lasts for approximately 2 weeks.
- Frequently, patients feel achiness/pain between their shoulder blades and in their upper back following the surgery. This is a result of stretching the ligaments in the spine back to their original height and is expected - this will resolve gradually over a few weeks.
- Immediately following your discharge from the hospital, you may resume light activity, such as walking, and light household chores. Dr. Wanderman asks that you refrain from more vigorous activities until at least the 3-week mark after surgery, to avoid having sweat get into your healing incision.

- Your first post-op check will be scheduled 2 weeks after your surgery. Your second post-op check will be scheduled 6 weeks after your surgery, and new x-rays will be taken at that time.
- Postoperatively patients typically return to work within 1-2 weeks if they have a sedentary job. For more physical jobs, Dr. Wanderman will work with you to determine the ideal time to return to work, often around the 6-week mark.

## WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF SURGERY?

- Most patients do not notice a significant change in their neck motion following surgery.
- Most people can resume all normal activities 6 months after surgery, and should not anticipate any significant changes from their baseline.