



What is Nucleoplasty?

Nucleoplasty is a procedure with involves placing a needle into a herniated disc and removing a small portion of the disc through the needle.

How does it help the pain?

By removing a portion of the disc, the size of the disc herniation can be reduced. By reducing the size of the disc herniation, pressure on nearby nerves is reduced often providing relief of pain.

Who can benefit from Nucleoplasty?

Patients with herniated discs who suffer from back or leg pain can make good candidates for nucleoplasty. Patients having a nucleoplasty have often failed other conservative treatments including physical therapy, medications, or epidural steroid injections.

What happens during the procedure?

An IV will be started prior to the procedure and you will be given medicine to make you feel sleepy. You will lie on your stomach and your back will be cleaned and draped with sterile dressings. The skin over the area is numbed and a

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thin needle is inserted into the herniated disc using x-ray guidance. A special probe is inserted through the needle which attaches to a machine. A small amount of tissue is removed from the disc. The procedure takes approximately 30 minutes.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be monitored in the office for 1 hour following the procedure. Rest is encouraged the day of the procedure and ice may be applied to the site of the injection. You may feel more discomfort over the next few days, however, your pain will generally improve within 1-2 weeks. You will be seen two weeks after the procedure for a follow up visit.

What are the possible side effects?

As with any procedure, a small number of patients may experience side effects which will be explained in more detail by your doctor. A few potential side effects are listed below, however, the vast majority of patients experience no side effects at all.

- Bleeding
- Infection in the disc
- Nerve damage
- Lack of relief

- Localized pain

What if I am taking blood thinning medications? (Eg., Coumadin, Plavix, Ticlid, Aggrenox):

Coumadin must be stopped 5 days before your procedure and you must have some laboratory studies taken immediately before your procedure (Eg., PT, INR). Your doctor may ask you to stop other medications before your procedure as well.

Does the procedure hurt?

Because you will be slightly sedated, you may not remember the procedure. In addition, the area is numbed with local anesthetic before the procedure, thus most patients experience only modest discomfort.

Will I have any restrictions?

Driving is not permitted on the day of the procedure. You should take it easy on the day of the procedure.