

Intradiscal Electrothermal Therapy (IDET)

This minimally invasive procedure is performed to alleviate the effects of low back pain caused by diseased or small herniations of discs. The IDET procedure is usually performed on an outpatient basis. The patient is awake during the hour-long procedure that uses local anesthesia and a mild sedative to reduce discomfort.

STEP 1

After the affected disc level is located, the surgeon uses live x-ray imaging to guide a hollow needle into the disc.

STEP 2

An electrothermal catheter, or heating wire, is then inserted through the needle and maneuvered to find the diseased portion of the disc.

STEP 3

The temperature of the heating catheter is slowly increased to about 194 degrees Fahrenheit (90 degrees Celsius), raising the temperature of the disc wall.

STEP 4

The heat will shrink and repair the tears in the disc wall area. Small nerve endings are also cauterized, or burned, to make them less sensitive. The patient may feel some pain during the procedure, which is an indication that the heat is being applied to the appropriate area.

