

Percutaneous Disc Nucleoplasty

OVERVIEW

This minimally-invasive procedure uses a small needle and advanced radiofrequency technology to reduce a herniated disc, quickly relieving pain in most patients. The procedure may be done using a gentle relaxing medicine and local anesthetic on an outpatient basis.

STEP 1

After some anesthetic is injected to numb the area, a thin needle called a cannula is inserted through the back and into the herniated disc. The surgeon uses x-ray images to guide the placement of the cannula.

STEP 2

A small catheter-like device is inserted into the disc. The device sends pulses of radio waves to dissolve small portions of the disc nucleus. Because only enough of the disc is vaporized to reduce pressure inside the disc, the spine remains stable.

STEP 3

The empty space left behind draws the disc wall herniation back in place.

END OF PROCEDURE

The device and needle are removed, and the insertion area in the skin is covered with a small bandage. Because no muscles or bone are cut during the procedure, recovery is fast and scarring is minimized. The patient may need a day of bed rest after the procedure, as well as physical therapy. Most may return to normal activity within one to six weeks.

