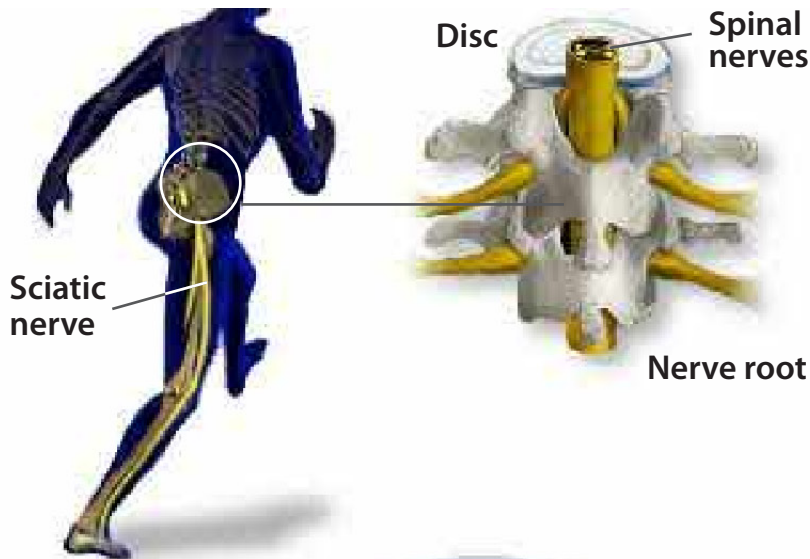
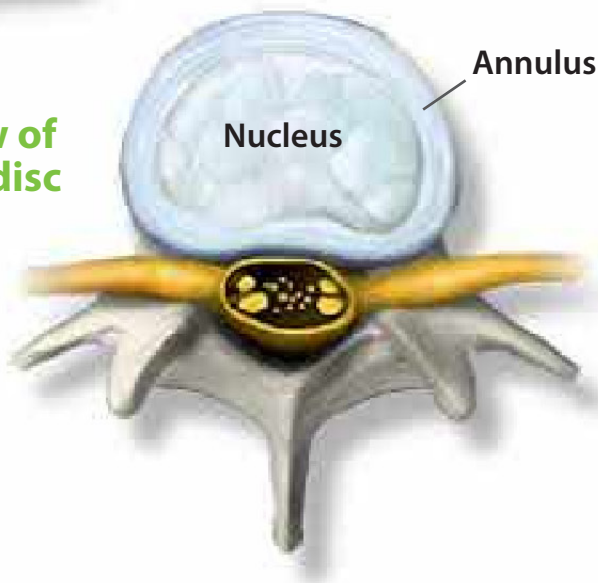


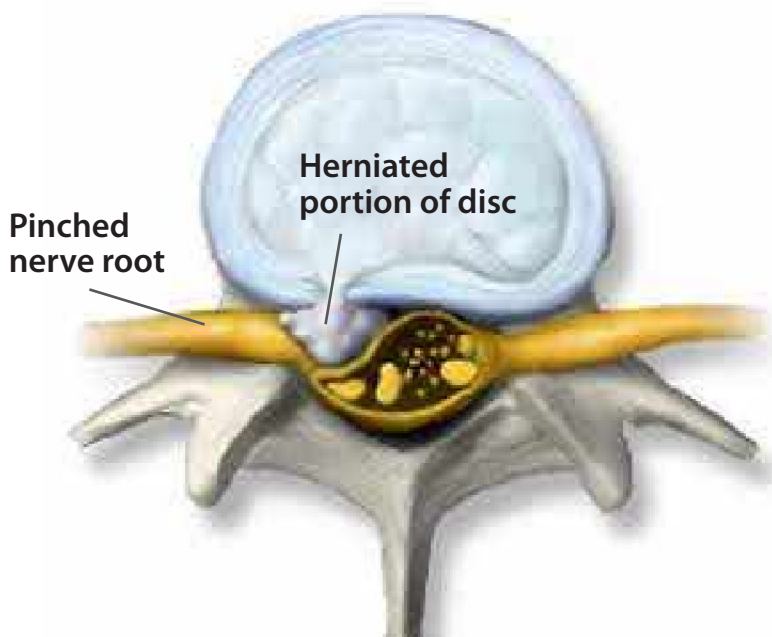
Herniated Discs



Top view of normal disc



The affected Disc



Overview

This rupture of a vertebral disc can be caused by the normal wear of aging or by traumatic injury. A herniated disc can push painfully against a nerve root, sending pain down the sciatic nerve and resulting in a burning, tingling and/or numbing sensation from the lower back down to one or both feet.

The Healthy Disc

Vertebral discs are the spinal column's shock absorbers. The discs cushion the vertebral bones and allow them to twist and bend. Vertebral discs are composed of two main parts, a soft inner nucleus (nucleus pulposus) and a tough, fibrous outer wall (annulus fibrosus).

Herniated Discs

A herniated disc occurs when small tears form in the wall of an injured disc. Damaged pieces of the nucleus (which can harden and break apart with age) push through the tears and out of the disc wall. The herniated disc often compresses a nerve root, causing pain or tingling in the legs. Strong pain tends to come and go. Bending, twisting and sitting may make the pain worse. Lying down relieves pressure on the spine.