What Is Lumbar Microsurgery?

Lumbar microsurgery is a way of doing low-back surgery through a small incision. There are two types of lumbar microsurgery. Microdecompression is removal of bone from the spine. Microdiskectomy is removal of disk. This removal takes pressure off nerves and reduces symptoms.

Removing Bone

During a microdecompression, bone is removed. First, a small portion of the lamina is removed. It is taken from the vertebrae above and below the pinched nerve. Removing part of the lamina is called a laminotomy. If there is no disk problem, the small opening made by this process may take pressure off the nerve. But most often, additional bone is pressing on a nerve. This bone is also removed.

Removing Disk

During a microdiskectomy, some disk is removed. In most cases, a laminotomy must first be done to expose the damaged disk. The part of the disk outer wall and soft center that presses on the nerve can then be removed. Any disk matter that is loose or that may cause problems in the future is also taken out. There is usually enough disk remaining to cushion the vertebrae.
How You Benefit

Lumbar microsurgery uses a smaller incision than traditional lumbar surgery. This means more of your skin and muscles stay intact. A smaller incision also helps you heal faster. This surgery often relieves leg pain from the hip down to the foot, reduces leg numbness, allows leg strength to improve, and sometimes reduces back pain (after the pain from surgery is gone).