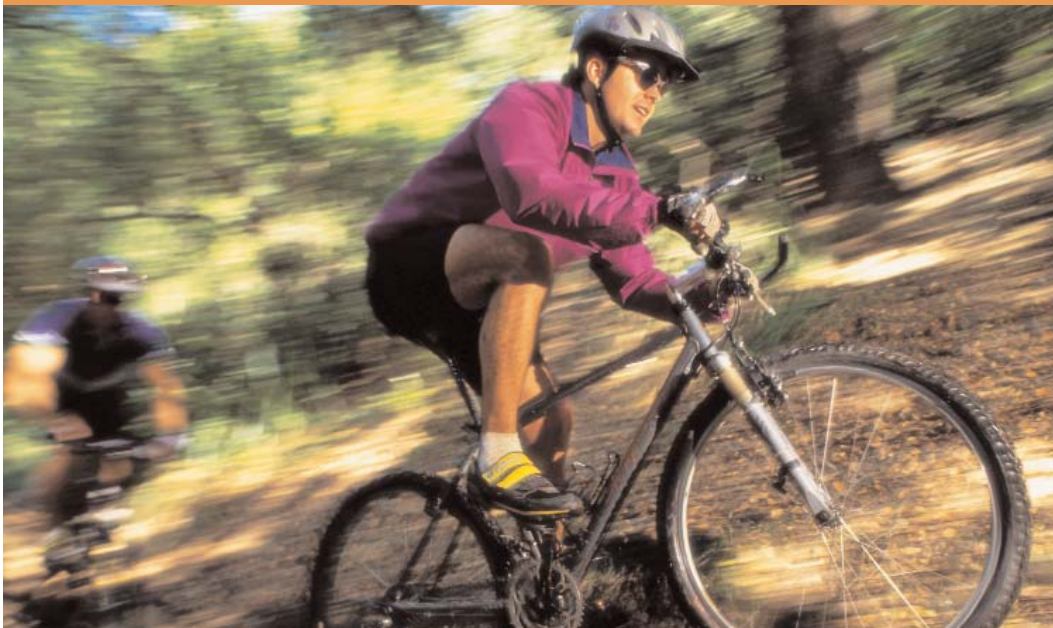


Artificial Disc Replacement

at Stamford Hospital's Spine Center



Chronic back pain can be both discouraging and debilitating — especially for people who haven't been able to find a solution. Until recently, the only surgical treatment for individuals with lower back pain caused by degenerative disc disease was spinal fusion. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has recently approved a new device, the Charité artificial disc, for implantation in qualified patients. Stamford Hospital is one of just 50 training sites nationwide, and the first hospital in Connecticut to offer this procedure. Stamford Hospital's Human Motion Institute provides seamless, coordinated care from diagnosis to postoperative physical therapy for patients considering this innovative and effective solution to chronic back pain.

What is disc replacement surgery?

Many patients with back pain can be helped with noninvasive treatments, such as medication, bracing, and/or physical therapy. For those who require surgery, there are only two alternatives—spinal fusion and disc replacement. Spinal fusion is effective, but often results in some loss of mobility. Artificial disc replacement, in which the damaged or worn-out disc is removed and the new Charité device is implanted between vertebrae in the lumbar region, preserves range of motion. An additional advantage of the artificial disc is that healing time is reduced, since bone graft is unnecessary and only a single incision is required.

Who is a candidate for artificial disc replacement?

Artificial disc replacement is a viable alternative for people who are relatively young and active, who have chronic lower back pain from disc deterioration due to arthritis or injury, and have undergone conservative treatment such as physical therapy, wearing a brace, or pain medication, with no relief for a period of six months or more. In order to be considered for this surgical procedure, patients must have one diseased disc between L4 and L5, or between L5 and S1. Patients must also meet certain medical criteria. Only a qualified physician can make the determination.

What is involved in artificial disc replacement?

The procedure is performed under general anesthesia, on an inpatient basis. Most patients are hospitalized for three or four days. Pain and discomfort are usually manageable with oral medications. Some patients may need to wear a back brace or elastic bandage following the surgery, and all will be expected to follow a plan for gradually increasing physical activity during the period of recovery.

What should I do if I am interested in pursuing this surgical treatment?

Men and women who believe artificial disc replacement might be the answer to their chronic lower back pain problem may receive more information, or schedule an appointment, by calling Stamford Hospital's Human Motion Institute, toll-free, at 1(877) 747-4640. To learn more about the Charité artificial disc, log on to the company's website at www.charitedisc.com, or www.allaboutbackandneckpain.com.

Is this a brand-new procedure?



The Charité artificial disc has been successfully implanted in more than 9,000 patients in Europe, where it has been in use since 1987.

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