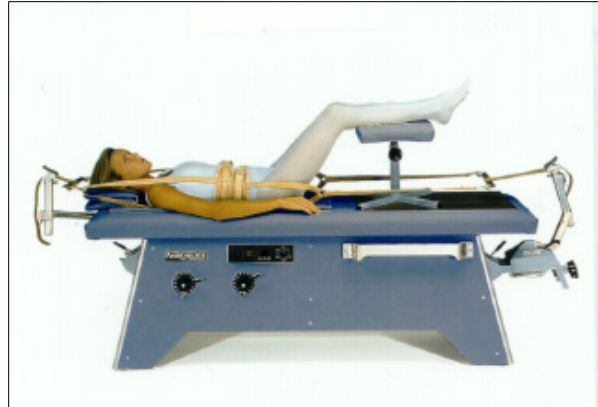


## CONDITIONS WE TREAT – DISC HERNIATIONS

### DISC HERNIATIONS

Discs may herniate for a number of reasons. Lifting too heavy a load and lifting it the wrong way, injuries and an unlevel or posturally stressed spine are all reasons for disc herniation. Disc herniations are not uncommon in young men and continue to be quite prevalent through mid-age becoming somewhat less likely as we get older and the disc normally loses some of its fluid content. Reoccurring episodes of severe back or neck pain which often occurs for little or no reason can indicate disc tears. Pain and numbness often travels from the spine to the flank, hip, testicles or pubic area, thigh, leg or foot or to the head, chest, shoulder, arm and hand depending on the location of the herniation and which spinal nerves may be compressed. Discs can also herniate and cause little local back pain. These 'silent discs' may cause pain or numbness in one or more areas outside the spine as in those mentioned above.



Once discs herniate they undergo deterioration in most cases especially when they are under continued stress due to abnormal posture or mechanics of the spine. (See the section on spinal deterioration.) These deterioration changes can produce a worsening of pain with increased head, chest, leg or arm symptoms over time. Persistent nerve pressure from the disc can alter blood flow to the arm or leg and can affect the function of areas normally supplied by the nerves; internal organs, penis, heart, lungs, stomach, diaphragm, intestines, etc. This can alter organ function and health.

Once a disc is torn the spine is never the same again. Chronic muscle tension around the spine, frequent pain episodes, impaired spinal movement and capacity and distant symptoms are the norm. Spinal manipulation, coupled with specific exercise strengthening and therapies like spinal traction are safe and often extremely effective in treating disc herniation. Such care can loosen jammed spinal discs and joints and reduce pressure on compressed nerves.



Disc herniations may be corrected without surgery in many cases (See disc traction). Often after surgery the disc is no better or better initially but only for a short duration.

Many times conditions which stressed the low back or neck and were instrumental in producing the disc herniation are never addressed. This includes many conditions of spinal posture and mechanics that unlevel or stress the spine. Without attention to and correction of such problems spinal pain usually continues and additional discs may herniate. With 9 years of focused training in the diagnosis and treatment of disc and other conditions the chiropractic orthopedist can provide expert evaluation and care for such problems.