

didn't show any signs of radiculopathy — no radiating pain, numbness or tingling along her legs."

However, herniated discs often evolve to impinge on the nerves, and this is what Palafox started to experience. She went to the emergency department twice with back pain so severe that she had difficulty walking.

"I couldn't do anything," Palafox says. "It was hard getting out of bed, walking, driving — the back pain was constant, and I was literally disabled."

A consult with Dr. Limonadi confirmed that the pain was now radiating through her left leg and an MRI scan detected a large, herniated disc on the left side of her lumbosacral joint. When pain management and other measures did not alleviate her suffering, she was once again scheduled for surgery.

"I was nervous, especially because I had had the brain surgery two months before, but I knew Dr. Limonadi was going to do it, I knew he was good and I knew he cared," she says.

In March 2009, Dr. Limonadi performed a L5-S1 microdiscectomy, a minimally invasive procedure to take out the damaged disc and relieve pressure on her spine.

"Although it's one of the simplest operations we perform as neurosurgeons, we don't take it lightly. We approach it with the same level of detail as we do with complex brain operations," says Dr. Limonadi, who emphasizes that one of the first steps to advance in neurosurgery training is mastering this operation.

With postoperative pain management, Palafox was able to walk the length of her hospital bed within 24 hours of surgery. She walked daily, determined to get home to her children as soon as possible. Within two weeks, Palafox was pain-free and able to resume all her normal activities.

Although back pain is very common, Dr. Limonadi emphasizes that it's critical for physicians to make a correct diagnosis and exhaust conservative measures. If surgical intervention is required, patients should be approached in a way that minimizes injury and puts them back on the same trajectory of their lives.

Palafox looks back and points out how fortunate she was in terms of patient care and medical expertise.

"When you're in so much pain and you're told you have to have major surgeries, you need someone who makes you feel like a 'person' and Dr. Limonadi does that. He really cares, makes you feel comfortable and safe, and educates you on everything that is going to happen and why it needs to happen."

"The biggest treasure in our lives is the influence we have on those we encounter," says Dr. Limonadi. "It's important not to take it lightly and to try to have a positive impact."

To learn more about Eisenhower Neuroscience Institute, visit [EisenhowerHealth.org/Neuro](http://EisenhowerHealth.org/Neuro) or call 760-837-8020.

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