



# BACK SURGERY

THE REAL AND HIDDEN COSTS

**By: Dr. Eric Kaplan, D.C., F.I.A.M.A.**

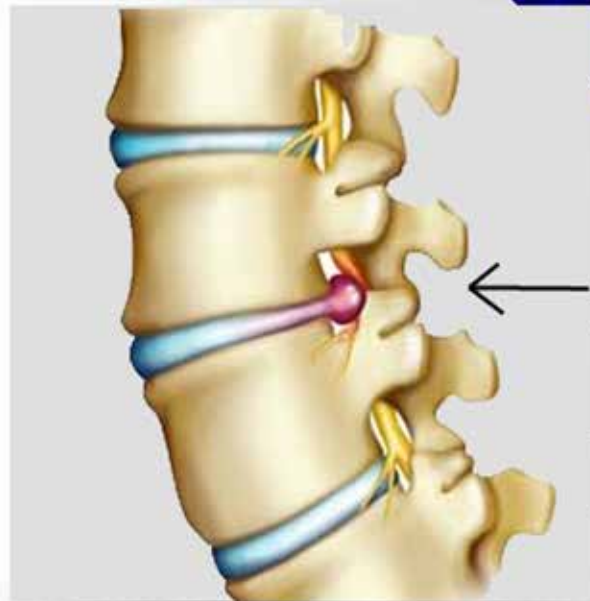
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# BACK PAIN

- ▶ Affects up to 80 percent of Americans at some point in their lives <sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Lower back pain is the most common disability among people under 45 <sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Costs more than \$100 billion annually in the USA <sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Over \$20 billion of this total is spent on back surgery <sup>4</sup>



1. [http://www.arthritis.org/disease-center.php?disease\\_id=4](http://www.arthritis.org/disease-center.php?disease_id=4)

2. <http://www.disabled-world.com/disability/types/spinal/backpain/back-pain-resources.php>

3. <http://www.news-medical.net/news/2004/04/18/621.aspx>

4. <http://www.annals.org/content/149/12/901.full.pdf+html>

# BACK SURGERY —AN EPIDEMIC?

- ▶ More than 1 million Americans undergo back surgery yearly
- ▶ This rate is double that of most developed countries and five times that of the United Kingdom



Source: [http://generalmedicine.sulte101.com/article.cfm/the\\_truth\\_about\\_back\\_pain\\_surgery](http://generalmedicine.sulte101.com/article.cfm/the_truth_about_back_pain_surgery)

## **Surgical Complications May Include:**

- ▶ Infections
- ▶ Nerve Damage
- ▶ Permanent Disability



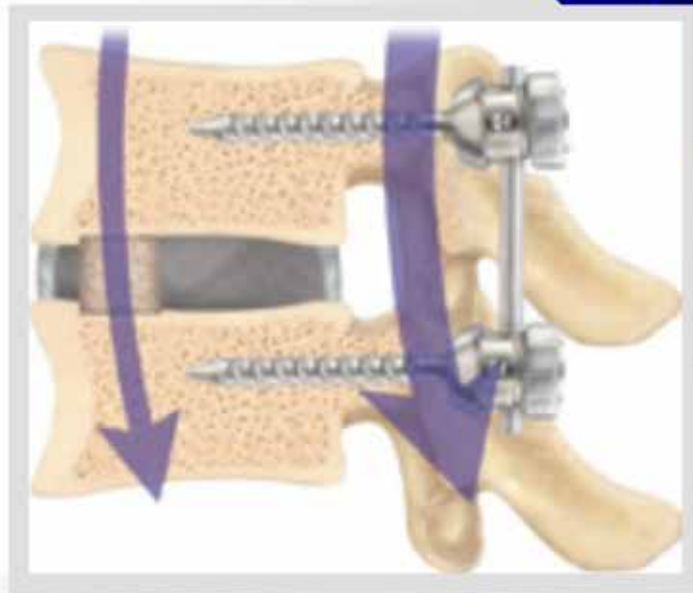


# COSTS OF BACK SURGERY

- ▶ \$6-8K...endoscopic surgery
- ▶ \$60K...spinal fusion
- ▶ \$85K...laminectomy

## Additional costs can include:

- ...Physical Therapy
- ...Medication & Hospital Charges
- ...Lost Wages
- ...Post-Surgical Complications  
Including Infection



# **“BUT MY INSURANCE COVERS BACK SURGERY.”**

**Well, that's partially true.**

But here's the part that isn't: When you factor in your copay and additional expenses such as rehab and medication, your out-of-pocket expenses are huge.

Copay, as percentage	20%	30%
Actual cost of copay	\$10,000	\$15,000
Cost of Rehab	\$1,000	\$1,000
Cost of Medication	\$500	\$500
Total cost out-of-pocket	\$11,500	\$16,500

\*(Estimated typical costs)

# BACK SURGERY

"Back surgery—the risks are enormous. Infection, nerve injury, the failed back surgery where you have chronic pain for the rest of your life....

"If I have a patient that comes in, I don't care who they are, and they've got back pain or neck pain, before I would ever recommend that they had a surgery, a surgical procedure, an invasive procedure, even an epidural, an injection, I would recommend Spinal Decompression, because there's no down side to trying this and it works."



**Dr. Timothy Kremchek, M.D.,  
Orthopedic Surgeon as seen on ESPN,  
HBO, USA Today and Sports Illustrated**



## Spine Surgeons Frequently Claim 95-98% Surgical Success Rate

### What's the truth?

- ▶ Some studies show the failure rate to be as high as 50 percent.
- ▶ For single-level spinal fusions, as few as 40 percent of patients obtain significant pain relief.
- ▶ Microdiscectomy's overall success rate is only 74%.
- ▶ Workmen's comp patients report success in only 29% of cases.
- ▶ Other causes of Failed Back Surgery Syndrome include:
  - ...Foraminal and Spinal Stenosis
  - ...Painful Disc Disease
  - ...Pseudoarthrosis
  - ...Recurrent Herniated Nucleus Pulposus
  - ...Arachnoiditis



**Sources: Surg Neurol 1998 Mar;49(3):263-7; discussion 267-8**

<http://www.emaxhealth.com/2/45/28350/unnecessary-spinal-surgery-will-waste-billions-2009.html>

# Back Surgery: Deadly

- ▶ Nearly 1 in 50 back-surgery patients dies within three years of surgery.
- ▶ The death rates are significantly higher when analgesics are involved.
- ▶ The mortality rate increases sevenfold when cage devices are used in conjunction with analgesics.



Source: "Deaths after Back Surgery Often Related to Analgesics,"  
<http://www.thedoctorschannel.com/video/1762.html?specialty=2>

## **“TRY THE NONSURGICAL AVENUES FIRST”**

A 2008 article in Newsweek\* chronicled the story of Seattle resident Bruce Wilson, who has endured seven back surgeries (at a cost of \$278,000) and spends hundreds monthly on pain relievers. Despite all this, Wilson's back pain persists.

"I'd tell young people with back problems that they should try the non-surgical avenues first," Wilson now says.



\*<http://www.newsweek.com/2008/02/11/the-price-of-pain.html>

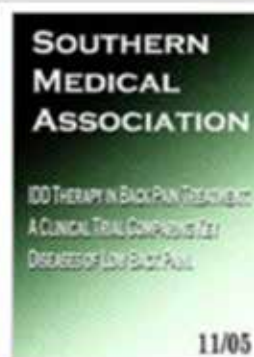
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avenue currently available**

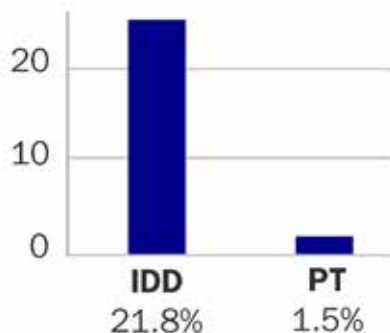


# Published Studies on IDD Therapy®





# EMORY UNIVERSITY STUDY



**IDD v. Physical Therapy:  
Reduction in mean Oswestry pain  
index scores over six weeks**

American Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation: Volume 85(3) March 2006, pp. 283-4.

# Traction v. Decompression

**86% of ruptured disc patients had "good or excellent" results using decompression therapy compared to 55% for traction subjects.**



Shealy N, Borgmeyer V. Decompression, reduction, and stabilization of the lumbar spine: a cost effective treatment for lumbosacral pain. Am J Pain Manage. 1997;7:63-65.

## US Musculoskeletal Review Study

This study revealed an overall 88% success rate in alleviating back pain.

Among those deemed surgical candidates, the success rate was even higher: 24 out of 25 patients reported some improvement in their backpain symptoms, with 92% of them describing their improvement as “moderate to excellent.”

Drugs... **27%**

Surgery... **47%**

IDD Therapy... **92%**

### SOURCES:

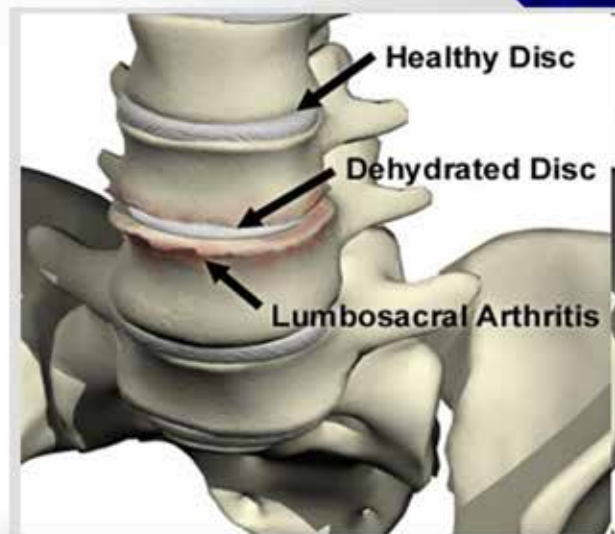
Drugs 27%...Haake M., Muller H., Schade-Brittinger C., et al. "German Acupuncture Trials (GERAC) for Chronic Low Back Pain. Randomized, Multicenter, Blinded, Parallel-Group Trial With 3 Groups." Arch Intern Med 2007; 167:1892-1898.

Surgery 47%...Radin, E.L. "Reasons for Failure of L5-S1 Intervertebral Disc Excisions." International Orthop. 1987; 11:255-259.

IDD Therapy 92%...McClure, Dennis, and Farris, Bethany. "Intervertebral Differential Dynamics Therapy: A New Direction for the Treatment of Low Back Pain."

**“Non-surgical spinal decompression was associated with a reduction in pain and an increase in disc height.”<sup>1</sup>**

- ▶ A team of physicians from such prestigious institutions as Johns Hopkins University, Stanford University, and Georgetown University conducted a clinical trial that concluded:
- ▶ Patients who underwent non-surgical spinal decompression experienced, on average, a 74% decrease in pain.
- ▶ Patients also experienced an average of a 17% increase in disc height.



<sup>1</sup> BioMed Central, “Restoration of disk height through non-surgical spinal decompression is associated with decreased discogenic low back pain: a retrospective cohort study.”



## 40-Year-Old Male with Bulging Cervical Disc



**Before**



**After**

Using NAM technology with IDD Therapy®







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