

Laser Surgery For Cervical Herniated Disc

So the first thing when we talk about surgery that everybody is excited to hear about is laser surgery. I do not know why it is, but every patient loves the idea of a laser and we are not that excited about it, because we have a job to do in getting the pressure off the nerve and we are not so convinced that laser helps us any more than our traditional techniques. Believe me, we want to do the surgery in the most least invasive way and on this list of surgical treatments, I would say, laser surgery is the most minimally invasive. The question is, does it work?. Some people just love lasers and must go through their whole life asking for laser. They go to the restaurant. Instead of getting a knife and fork, they want a laser. They go and get their car fixed and have a flat tire. I want you to fix it with a laser. I mean, lasers exist, but it does not necessarily mean that it is the best tool for you when you are talking about having spine surgery and getting better. I had an opportunity to ask Dr. Stern his feelings about laser surgery, so let us hear what he has to say about laser surgery as treatment for a cervical herniated disc.

I was so fascinated with this topic that about two years ago I did an extensive search of the literature and actually wrote a paper in Spine Line which is a journal published by the North American Spine Society and I was somewhat amazed to discover that there really are no good randomized controlled studies or randomized studies that would give me an indication that laser surgery has a significant role in the treatment of cervical spine. That does not mean that patients have not gotten better from laser surgery from the cervical spine, but most of the treatment modalities that I recommend in our own practice, I feel better if I have some evidence in the literature that there is efficacy that it makes sense. I have lived through enough periods where one modality has become popular, fallen out of favor, another modality has become popular that I tend not to go with something that is popular. I have reached a point in my surgical career where I really want to make decisions for my patients based on some science. Right now, I do not see the science behind laser surgery, perhaps it is coming, in which case I will be happy to change my mind, but right now, in terms of best laser surgery, I cannot answer that question. I have not had enough experience with it myself and I do not see enough evidence in the literature to support it.