

What are the different types of surgery for a herniated cervical disc

When you see your surgeon and it has been decided you need surgery, the next thing to do is to decide what surgery do you need, so the first fork in the road is "do I need surgery," yes or no. If the answer is yes, the next fork in the road is "what surgery do I get?" Is it an anterior approach, is it a posterior approach, is it an open approach, is it microscopic. If you keep in mind the principles of what is going on, it will help you decide what surgery to have. Remember, the disc is herniated out. It is putting pressure on the nerves. The objectives are two things.

1. Remove the disc from putting pressure on the nerves.
2. Somehow stabilize the spine after you have taken out the disc.

So the first part is called decompression and that could be done usually anteriorly. It is called anterior cervical decompression and following that you can have a choice of having a fusion or having a disc replacement. So we have always wanted to do this most minimally and basically as possible. So usually we do an anterior approach, and this bone is just an inch below the skin using a microscope, we can go down and we can take the disc out, and then we can stabilize the spine. There are two methods of stabilizing the spine. One is something that is called a disc replacement which allows movement of the spine and there are different models. This one is called the ProDisc, and there are two components that work together to allow motion, and this one is called Prestige disc, also heavy motion. There are pros and cons of these and you can discuss these with your surgeon and the other option is to do a fusion to stabilize the spine. The traditional way is to put in a plate and screw system and now we have these miniplate, low profile plate and screws, which actually do the same thing, and even with this being a two-level fusion, you can see that there is a lot of mobility remaining in the spine. So speak with your surgeon about which option is correct for you, the disc replacement or the disc fusion, and if so, with the standard plate or with the miniplate. The most important thing is to pick the least invasive, most minimally invasive procedure for you, so that you can have the surgery and go home quickly. Typically, in our hands, we do the surgery in the morning and you are home the same day.

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