

Spinal – Lumbar Decompression

Introduction

Lumbar decompression surgery is a type of surgery used to treat compressed nerves in the lower (lumbar) spine.

It's only recommended when non-surgical treatments haven't helped.

The surgery aims to improve symptoms such as persistent pain and numbness in the legs caused by pressure on the nerves in the spine.

Lumbar decompression surgery is often used to treat:

- **spinal stenosis** – narrowing of a section of the spinal column, which puts pressure on the nerves inside
- a [slipped disc](#) and [sciatica](#) – where a damaged spinal disc presses down on an underlying nerve
- **spinal injuries** – such as a fracture or the swelling of tissue
- **metastatic spinal cord compression** – where cancer in one part of the body, such as the lungs, spreads into the spine and presses on the spinal cord or nerves

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

Guidance for Patients

If lumbar decompression surgery is recommended, you'll usually have at least 1 of the following procedures:

- **laminectomy** – where a section of bone is removed from 1 of your vertebrae (spinal bones) to relieve pressure on the affected nerve
- **discectomy** – where a section of a damaged disc is removed to relieve pressure on a nerve
- **spinal fusion** – where 2 or more vertebrae are joined together with a section of bone to stabilise and strengthen the spine

In many cases, a combination of these techniques may be used.

Lumbar decompression is usually carried out under [general anaesthetic](#), which means you'll be unconscious during the procedure and won't feel any pain as it's carried out. The whole operation usually takes at least an hour, but may take much longer, depending on the complexity of the procedure.

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening –severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains –please dial 999.

GP surgeries are still open

GP practice staff are also helping patients to manage their conditions at home while they wait for hospital appointments. GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic and GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it. When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic.

Contact Us

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