

# SPINE GLOSSARY

**Anatomy of the Spine:** The spine is made up of 33 bones stacked on top of one another creating the main support for your body. It is divided into five regions, starting with the Cervical area (neck) which connects the spine to the skull, the Thoracic area which is the middle area of your back, the Lumbar area (lower back), the Sacrum area which is the area where the pelvis is attached, and finally the Coccyx (tailbone) which is the lowest part of the spine.”

**Anterior Cervical Discectomy and Fusion (ACDF):** Anterior Cervical Discectomy and Fusion (ACDF) is the most common cervical (neck) surgery, used to address disc issues in the neck, where the herniated or compromised disc is removed. The ‘discectomy’ refers to the removal of the bone and the ‘fusion’ refers to the bone graft created to stabilize the area.

**Arthritis:** Condition where joints become inflamed and painful.

**Cervical:** Also known as the neck. The term used to distinguish the area of the upper spine where the skull and spinal column connect.

**Cervical Epidural Steroid Injection:** Procedure where a steroid is injected into the affected area of the neck to alleviate pain.

**Cervical Radiculopathy:** Condition where the nerve roots in the Cervical Spine (neck) are irritated or compressed (a common cause can be a herniated disc bulging outward creating pressure on the nerves).

**Coccyx:** Also known as the tailbone. The term used to distinguish the lowest part of the spine.

**Disc:** The fibrous material that lies between the each vertebra in the spinal column which act like a shock absorber. Discs also act as a ligament to hold the vertebrae together.

**Epidural:** The space outside the membrane that surrounds the spinal cord.

**Epidural Steroid Injections:** An injection therapy commonly used to help with lower back pain, where a steroid is injected into the epidural space.

**Facet Joint:** The facet joints are the joints in your spine that make allow you to bend and twist. Nerves exit your spinal cord through these joints on their way to other parts of your body. Healthy facet joints have cartilage, which allows your vertebrae to move smoothly against each other without grinding.

**Fluoroscopic Guided Piriformis Injection:** Procedure where a steroid is injected into the piriformis muscle (which is located in the gluteal are of your lower limb). This is done using a fluoroscope (live imaging through X-RAY) to locate the specific area to target.

**Fluoroscopy:** Provides live imaging through X-RAY which creates a real time view.

**Herniated Disc:** Condition where the tissue between the bones in your spinal column get displaced or moved from its natural place

**High Field Open MRI:** Open MRI is bed that uses a larger opening compared to the tube used in traditional MRIs. Open MRI can accommodate a wider range of patients including those who may be claustrophobic. “High Field” means the quality of imaging is far superior than a regular image.”

**Interventional Pain Management:** A practice which encompasses non-invasive and minimally invasive therapies and treatments. Examples: epidural injections and physical therapy.

**Kyphoplasty:** Procedure using a balloon to create space prior to injecting of cement into a fractured vertebrae creating stabilization (an internal cast).

**Lamina:** The lamina is the bone that forms the backside of the spinal canal and makes a roof over the spinal cord.

**Lumbar:** The term used to distinguish the area of your lower back.

**Lumbar Epidural Steroid Injection:** Procedure where a steroid is injected into the affected area of the lower back to alleviate pain

**Lumbar Microdiscectomy:** Minimally invasive procedure to remove herniated disc from the lower part of the back. 'Micro' refers to the use of a microscope to target the specific area creating a minimally invasive procedure with a fast recovery period.

**Lumbar Radiculopathy:** Condition where the nerve roots in the Lumbar Spine (lower back) are irritated or compressed (a common issue is Sciatica, where the sciatic nerve is compromised causing leg pain).

**Lumbar Stenosis:** Condition when the spinal canal in the lower back becomes compressed, causing pain and discomfort

**MRI (Magnetic Resource Imaging):** MRI or magnetic resource imaging uses a magnetic field and radio waves to form a detailed image of the tissues and organs in your body  
"Maximal Access Spinal Surgery.

**Posterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion (MAS PLIF):** Maximal Access Spinal Surgery Posterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion is a surgical technique that creates a smaller incision than the PLIF procedure, allowing for less recovery time (patients typically go home the same day), minimal blood loss, and pain relief can be dramatically better.

**Medial Nerves:** The medial branch nerves are the small nerves attached to facet joints in the spine that carry pain signals to the brain. Facet joints are pairs of small joints that are situated at each vertebral level of the spine. Each facet joint is connected to two medial nerves that carry pain signals away from the spine to the brain.

**Minimally Invasive Surgery (MIS):** Surgery performed through tiny incisions allowing for quicker recovery time and little discomfort, while offering the same benefits of traditional surgeries.

**Osteoporosis:** Condition where your bones become weak and subject to fracturing, related to age and possible vitamin deficiency.

**Posterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion (PLIF):** Posterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion (PLIF) is a surgical technique that creates a spinal fusion using a bone graft which triggers the body to create new bone growth.

**Radiculopathy:** Commonly know as a "pinched nerve". Condition where a nerve or set of nerves isn't working properly and is irritated, causing numbness, tingling, or burning sensation

**Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA):** Procedure which helps reduce pain by using an electrical current to burn off the nerves causing the pain, performed with a thin needle that heats on the end.

**Revision Surgery:** Procedure used to correct problems with previous surgeries.

**Rheumatoid:** Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic inflammatory disorder affecting the lining of joints, causing a painful swelling that can eventually result in bone erosion and joint deformity. It occurs when your immune system mistakenly attacks your own body's tissues. It can occur at any age, but usually begins after age 40 and is much more common in women.

**Sacroiliac Joint:** Joint found between the sacrum and ilium (the joint between the lower part of the spine and the hip).

**Sacroiliac Joint Steroid Injection:** Procedure where a steroid is injected into the sacroiliac joint, where the spine and hip joint meet to alleviate pain.

**Sacrum:** The term used to distinguish the area where the spinal column meets the pelvis.

**Scoliosis:** Sideways curvature of the spine

**Spinal Cord Stimulation (SCS):** Procedure used to alleviate chronic pain through electronic pulses to an area which prevent pain signals from traveling to the brain.

**Spinal Stenosis:** Condition where the spinal passageway (the area where the spinal cord and nerves exist) becomes narrow causing pressure.

**Spondylolisthesis:** Condition where a vertebrae in your back slides forward over the vertebrae below it, can either be caused "Degeneratively" meaning weakening of the vertebrae or "Isthmic" meaning that the vertebrae fractured

**Spondylosis:** Condition meaning spinal arthritis which can occur anywhere on the spine.

**Stenosis:** Term used to describe a narrowing of a passageway, for example the spinal column causing Spinal Stenosis.

**Thoracic:** The term used to distinguish the area of your middle back, which supports the rib cage.

**Thoracic Epidural Steroid Injection:** Procedure where a steroid is injected into the affected area of the middle back to alleviate pain.

**Vertebral Body Compression Fractures (VBCF):** Fracture or break of vertebrae in your back.

**Vertebra:** The singular form of vertebrae.

**Vertebrae:** The bones that make up the spinal column, consisting typically of a cylindrical body and an arch. Each vertebra has holes to allow the spinal cord to pass through it.

**Vertebroplasty:** Procedure which injects cement into a fractured vertebrae creating stabilization (an internal cast).