

Avoiding Back Surgery – Larry M. Bridge, DC

Back surgery is a serious decision for those who deal with acute or chronic back pain. Invasive, requiring extended rehabilitation and not always successful, back surgery should be a last resort only when other treatments fail. The only absolute reason for immediate surgery is loss of bowel or bladder control or progressive weakness in the extremities. Fusion surgery (2 vertebra joined with a plate and screws) generally has less favorable outcomes than disc repair surgery (snipping off bugling pieces). Spine fusion surgery patients report good results about 1/3 of the time, no better 1/3 time and worse 1/3 time. People usually resort to back surgery because of continuing pain. A major study on back surgery, reviewed on the front page of the NY Times, reported that getting a back surgery because of leg pain is not any more effective than waiting it out. It is not uncommon to require follow-up surgeries when the back surgery fails. When it comes to back surgery, seeking a chiropractic evaluation or any alternatives that seem reasonable is smart.

Failed Back Surgery Syndrome (FBSS)

Back surgery failure is so common that it has been termed Failed Back Surgery Syndrome. Statistics show that nearly 40% of back surgeries fail! No matter how skilled or experienced a surgeon is, each case presents its own unique problems that may lead to less than desired outcomes.

There are many reasons why back surgeries are often unsuccessful or have disappointing results. Often, surgery just addresses the symptoms and not the cause. Normal scarring of nerves, joints and tissue can lead to complications that are out of the surgeon's hands. In some cases, spinal fusion surgeries are successful in eliminating pain but lead to future aches and pains in areas above or below the fusion due to induced abnormal movements. Then after some time another surgery is needed to repair those joints that have been negatively affected by the abnormal motion that was a result of the first surgery. The vicious cycle continues on! The health of the patient can also influence the outcome of back surgery, and recent research indicates that smoking and obesity puts patients at high risk for unsuccessful back surgery. Often the out of shape physical condition a patient presents with before surgery, is part of the problem that leads to surgery. Without proper re-conditioning, the same issue can cause the need for additional surgeries or poor outcomes.

How can chiropractic care help me avoid back surgery?

Acute and chronic back pain can have a tremendous impact on every aspect of your life. It is natural to want a “quick fix” for back pain, but back surgery might not always be the best answer. Thankfully, chiropractic care can often offer proven, permanent relief for back pain and can help chronic pain sufferers avoid surgery and get back to enjoying active pain-free lives. Today's most advanced chiropractic practices treating back problems, integrate spinal decompression traction, rehab, laser therapies and medication help stop the progression to back surgery. Readers of Consumers Reports rated chiropractic the most effective means for treating back pain, in the September issue. This is the third survey by its readers that rated chiropractic-tops.

Spinal alignment and joint mechanics are critical to back health. Achieving proper spinal alignment and mechanics can often provide permanent relief for many back issues and prevent future damage caused by misaligned vertebrae. After an injury, chiropractic adjustments can restore optimal function to the spine and encourage proper healing without surgery. Back pain related to overuse, repeated movements or just normal “wear and tear” can also be corrected and health can be restored to the back through non-invasive chiropractic care.

Our goal is to help our patients enjoy active, pain-free lives by caring for the health of their spines with gentle, effective, non-surgical chiropractic care. We encourage anyone considering back surgery to take the time to investigate the proven relief of chiropractic treatments as an alternative to invasive back surgery. Chiropractic care is changing lives. If you suffer from back pain, you owe it to yourself to learn more!

Dr. Larry Bridge is a resident of Stanly County and has owned Montgomery County Chiropractic Center since 1997 with offices in Albemarle and Troy. He is board certified in Acupuncture and has more than 8 years experience using Decompression Traction for back and disc problems. For more info and past articles visit his website www.DrBridgeChiropractic.com or call 704-982-2102.