

5 THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT HERNIATED DISCS



Our physiotherapy clinics strongly believe that an educated patient is an empowered patient! That's why we love to not only help relieve our patients' pain but also continue educating our patients so that they can gain a better understanding of the health conditions they're facing.

[Visit one of our experienced Physiotherapists to help you get moving better again.](#)

WHAT IS A HERNIATED DISC

The bones (vertebrae) that form the spine in the back are cushioned by discs. These discs act as shock absorbers for the spinal bones and are like small pillows, with a tough, outer layer (annulus) that surrounds the inner nucleus.

A herniated disc is a fragment of the disc nucleus that is pushed out of the annulus, into the spinal canal through a tear or rupture in the annulus. Discs that become herniated usually are in an early stage of degeneration. The spinal canal has limited space, which is inadequate for the spinal nerve and the displaced herniated disc fragment. Due to this displacement, the disc presses on spinal nerves, often producing pain, which may be severe.



CAUSES OF HERNIATED DISCS

Sometimes, people are unable to determine what caused their herniated disc. We move so much, and there are certainly moments where we injure ourselves and don't realize it until days or weeks later when the pain hits!

The most common symptoms of a herniated disc are arm or leg pain. Many patients report feeling tingling, numbness, or a general feeling of weakness. A herniated disc in the neck can refer pain and or nerve symptoms to the shoulder blade and into the arm, a thoracic disc is mid back and through to the chest or around the rib cage and a lumbar disc can refer into the buttock and down the leg.

FACT 1 HERNIATED DISCS HAVE NOT SLIPPED

Discs don't slip out of place. They either bulge or herniate. With a disc bulge, the spinal disc (normally aligned between two vertebrae) protrudes out of place due to some sort of abnormal pressure or force. With a disc herniation, the outer fibrous layer of the disc ruptures, which allows the disc's inner substances to leak out into the surrounding area.

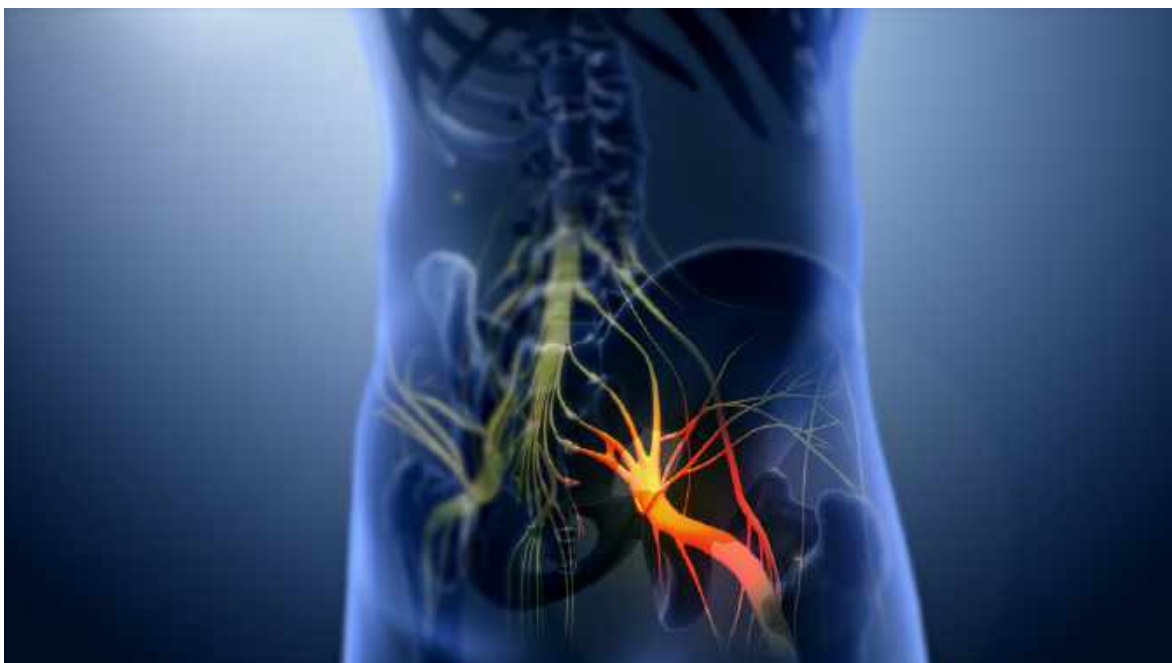
FACT 2 MANY PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT SYMPTOMS

The distribution of symptoms will depend on the level of the injured disc.

While some people actually have no symptoms at all, others may lead to stiffness, pain, and protective muscle guarding at the level of the herniation (this type of disc injury happens the most often in the neck and lower back). If neural structures are irritated or compressed, tingling and or numbness and weakness will be according to the level of the nerve affected.

Pain will also change depending on your activity. So the type and severity of symptoms you experience from a herniated disc depends on several factors, such as where the herniated disc occurs, how severe it is, and whether the injured disc tissue compresses on any nearby structures, like spinal nerve roots.

More information on [SCIATICA](#)



FACT 3 SOME INDIVIDUALS HAVE A HIGHER RISK FOR DISC HERNIATION

Some risk factors include * increased amount of physically challenging work,
* poor posture, * excessive bending or lifting, * smoking, * obesity,
* increased age, * trauma, * family history and * male gender . (sorry guys!)

FACT 4 PHYSIOTHERAPY IS A TREATMENT FOR HERNIATED DISCS

Conservative treatment is most commonly the first line of treatment. Physiotherapy is recommended for the treatment of herniated or bulging discs to assist patients to manage their pain and get them moving again. It is safe, effective and based on the most up to date research.

Physiotherapy is aimed at reducing the degree of inflammation, by incorporating mobilisation and soft tissue release integrated with low back strengthening exercises. We address other areas of postural imbalances that may be contributing to your disc herniation, and guide you through lifestyle or occupational modifications . Pain relieving modalities to reduce muscle spasm and help movement.

We tailor your treatment and exercise program to you, helping patients recover from their injury and manage their day-to-day pain easier.

Other recommended activities to assist recovery include yoga, walking, swimming and cycling.

Physio has been shown to be an effective modality in treating acute low back pain associated with a discogenic injury in the lumbar spine. Pain relieving medication and/ or anti -inflammatory drugs are also usually necessary.

FACT 5 PHYSIOTHERAPY CAN STILL HELP IF YOU DO REQUIRE SURGERY

Epidural local Anaesthetic and Steroid Injection may be indicated for chronic pain. Surgery may be warranted clinically in cases of persisting or progressive neurological symptoms. When a sudden loss of bowel or bladder control is present due to the disc bulge, immediate surgical intervention is usually required as this is considered a medical emergency.

Surgery is usually the last resort as it does not always result in predictable results. Patients are often left with residual pain and neurological deficits, which are often worse after surgery. If you and your doctor decide that surgical correction is the best choice for your needs, it's still beneficial to receive physiotherapy before and after your surgery.

Research indicates that people who participate in physical exercise after lumbar discectomy tend to have better outcomes when compared to patients who do not engage in regular exercise. Tailored Physiotherapy can maximize your core strength and stabilization and help with future prevention.

An important component of your program is to learn how to prevent future problems with your back or neck. We can help you determine risk factors that may lead to aggravation of low back pain or sciatica with our accessible guide.



MANAGING YOUR BACK PAIN

For tips on managing
your back pain , here's
our
Physios Guide to
Managing Back Pain

HINDMARSH AND FITZROY PHYSIOTHERAPY

281 Port Rd Hindmarsh
Ph 8346 2000
40 Prospect Rd Prospect
Ph 8342 2233

GET SOME PHYSIO HELP

Our Caring and experienced Physiotherapists have the skills to correctly assess your musculoskeletal problems and provide safe and effective treatment. Its is very tempting to think that its nothing and it will go away on its own, but early treatment can be the key to a quicker resolution if youre suffering with persistent pain.

If you are in the Adelaide area, you can book an assessment with one of our experienced physiotherapists in Hindmarsh and Prospect by calling our Physiotherapy clinics on 83462000 and 83422233. Let us help you to move better and feel better.

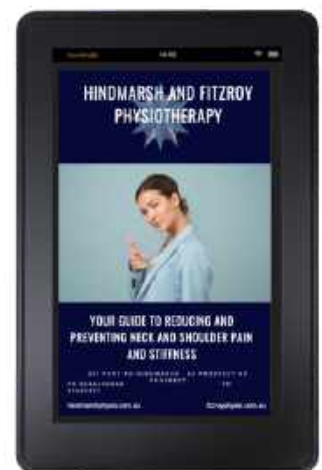
As Physios, we provide extensive education as part of our management and prevention programs, but realize not everyone can find the time or have the confidence to make an appointment. You are welcome to download these informative Resources that you may find useful to get you on your way.



COMMON SPORTS INJURIES



CHART YOUR WALKS



MANAGING NECK PAIN

For free access to our patient Resource just click the images above

You can call us on 83462000 at Hindmarsh and 83422233 for Fitzroy, Prospect or **CONTACT US ONLINE HERE** if you would like an appointment

We are passionate about providing our patients and community with information on prevention and management of many conditions. This PDF is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or treatment and should not be interpreted as such. Always seek advice from a qualified medical professional and use of this information is at your own risk