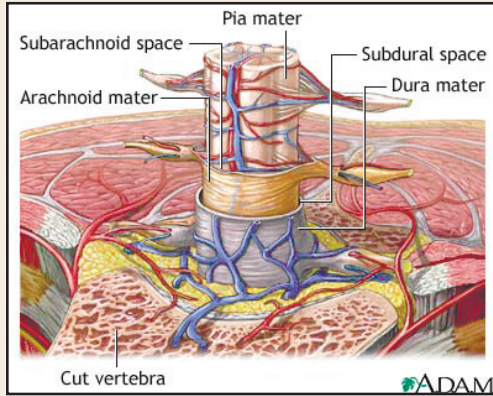


Advances in Spinal Care through Minimally Invasive Surgical Techniques

Dr. John H. Schneider of Northern Rockies Neuro-Spine has the expertise to care for and manage neck, arm, back and leg pain. He uses minimally invasive approaches to spinal disease from ruptured disks, bone spurs, tumors, spinal trauma and disabling back pain.

Surgical approaches for spinal diseases and ailments are varied and reflect a surgeon's training and expertise. Techniques that require extensive muscle dissection are considered traditional approaches. Unfortunately, long-term pain and the majority of disabling neck and back pain result from these techniques. "A surgeon's measure of success may be the



removal of a threatening bone spur or stabilization of a degenerative spine," Dr. Schneider says. "We consider surgery successful when patients are pain-free and return to life without restrictions."

"Ninety-five percent of pain both immediately and long term after spine surgery is from muscle damage," he adds.

According to Dr. Schneider, endoscopic and minimal access approaches to the spine should not be considered noninvasive surgery.

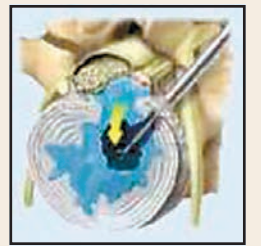
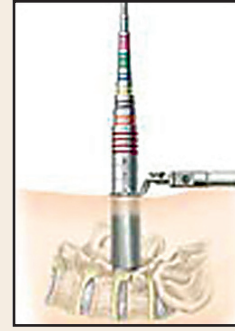
Instead, these techniques build upon technology that spine surgeons from a variety of specialties incorporate into their daily practice. Spinal surgeries that implement minimal access portals to cure diseases of the spine are now

revolutionizing the spinal surgeon's specialty. Minimal access portals avoid extensive muscle dissection; minimize injury and pain, resulting in dramatic increased patient satisfaction following the procedure. "The traditional approach to spinal surgeries requiring days of hospital recovery, severe pain and long scars on the neck and back are becoming archaic," says Dr. Schneider. Minimal access surgery targets the pathology threatening the nerves, spinal cord, and structural spine through smaller windows accessing the spine and avoiding muscle damage. Once the goals of decompressing the nervous system and stabilizing the spinal segments are achieved, healing of muscle and skin is rapid and the patient experiences

far less pain post surgery. "Patients undergoing minimal access spinal surgeries usually are discharged the same day or after one night in the hospital," Dr. Schneider says. "They begin active physical conditioning 2-3 weeks following surgery, and usually require less than a month of pain medications with return to life's enjoyable pursuits quickly and without restriction."

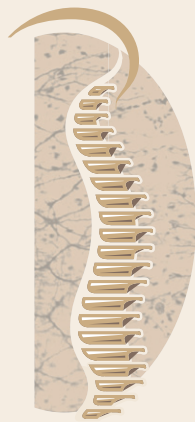
Benefits of minimal access surgery over traditional back surgery include the effective treatment of neck and back problems while minimizing trauma to the supportive spine muscles, dramatic decrease in postoperative pain and disability, and limited requirement for pain management medications that injure the body's organs. Additionally, there are significant economic benefits to the patient. "Outpatient and brief hospitalization following surgery result in significant cost savings to both patients and their insurance companies," Dr. Schneider says. "A rapid return to a productive lifestyle and the workforce also can minimize income loss for the individual."

Minimal access reconstructive techniques are technically demanding and require significant experience and expertise to avoid permanent neurological injury and surgical failure. The hospital and surgery centers used by Northern Rockies Neuro-Spine demonstrate excellence in pre- and postoperative nursing care, physical therapy, rehabilitation, and medical support. Dr. Schneider has operated at every facility in the region but will only admit patients to the medical centers with low infection rates and specialty nursing care that are dedicated to on-going quality improvement. "At Northern Rockies Neuro-Spine, we avoid excessive, unnecessary treatments and prolonged hospitalizations to guide our patients and cure their medical ailments. The ultimate responsibility for a successful surgical result is between the patient and the surgeon, however, a team of expert nursing and rehabilitation therapists are critical to patient outcomes," says Dr. Schneider.



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