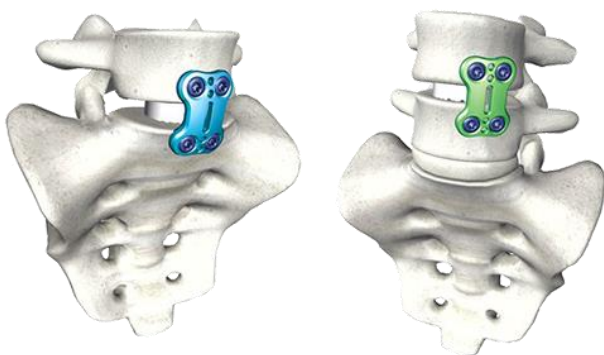


## What is an Anterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion (ALIF) procedure?

ALIF is a procedure used to treat problems such as disc degeneration, spine instability, and deformities in the curve of the spine. In this procedure, the surgeon works on the spine from the front (anterior) and removes a spinal disc in the lower (lumbar) spine. The surgeon inserts a bone graft into the space between the two vertebrae where the disc was removed (the interbody space). The goal of the procedure is to stimulate the vertebrae to grow together into one solid bone, a process known as fusion. Fusion creates a rigid and immovable column of bone in the problem section of the spine. This type of procedure attempts to reduce back pain and other symptoms.

Anterior approaches, such as in ALIF, allow access to the discs at the front of the spine and do not require muscle stripping as in posterior approaches. ALIF provides the surgeon with a clear and uncomplicated approach to the lumbar spine and patients tend to experience less incisional pain from this approach.



## Is an ALIF right for me?

Your physician might determine an ALIF procedure is a good option for you if you require an interbody fusion, are skeletally mature, and have received at least six weeks of non-surgical treatment.

Conversely, your physician may determine that an ALIF procedure is not a good option for you if you are not a good candidate for fusion surgery in general due to other medical conditions. These conditions can be, but are not limited to: signs of inflammation or infection near the operative site, patient sensitivity to implant materials, patients with inadequate bone quality, previous retroperitoneal surgery, previous aortic bypass or endovascular stent graft, and other indications.

## What can I expect...?

### *Before surgery*

Your physician will review your condition and explain all of your treatment options, including medications, physical therapy, and other surgeries, such as removal of the diseased disc, fusion, etc. On the day of your surgery, you will probably be admitted to the hospital early in the morning. You shouldn't eat or drink anything after midnight the night before. Your physician will provide thorough preoperative instructions.

Once you have been admitted to the hospital, you will be taken to a pre-op room and prepared for surgery. This may include instruction about the surgery, cleansing of your surgical site, as well as instruction about the postoperative period.

### *What happens during surgery?*

After you are sedated, positioned on your back and draped, an x-ray is taken of your spine to identify the location of the operative disc space.

## STEP 1

### APPROACH

Traditionally, a small incision is made through one side of the abdomen. The large blood vessels that lie in front of the spine are gently moved aside.

## STEP 2

### DISC REMOVAL

The diseased or damaged disc is removed to reduce pressure from the symptomatic cord or nerve root.

## What implants are used?

Below are some examples of implants that may be used during your ALIF procedure:



Interbody  
implant with  
plate and  
screws



### STEP 3

## IMPLANT

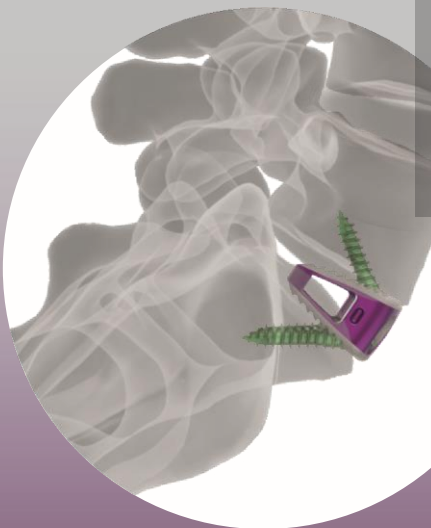
An implant is inserted into the void left once the disc is removed. This implant acts as a scaffold for bone to grow through, which will eventually stabilize that segment of your spine once fusion (bone growth) occurs.

This may include fixation as a standalone device.

### STEP 4

## FIXATION

A small plate and screws are then placed over the disc space to act as a stabilization device (internal brace) to help hold everything in place while fusion occurs.



**Interbody  
with Screws  
(Standalone  
Device)**

# What can I expect...?

## *After surgery*

After surgery, you will wake up in the recovery room, where your vital signs will be monitored and your immediate postoperative condition will be carefully observed. Most patients stay in the recovery room between one and three hours after surgery. Once the medical staff feels that you are doing well, you will be returned to your room in the hospital. It is normal for your incision to be sore immediately after surgery. The nursing staff will be checking to make sure that your vital signs are stable and that there is no problem with either the wound or nerve functions in your extremities. Most ALIF patients are discharged from the hospital the day after surgery, but your physician will determine the best postoperative course for you, depending on your comfort and any other health problems you may have. Your physician will discuss with you any pain medications to take home, as well as a prescribed program of activities.

## **Are there risks involved?**

Keep in mind that all surgery presents risks and complications that are important to discuss with your physician prior to your surgery. Listening to your physician's guidance both before and after surgery will help ensure the best possible outcome from your procedure. Risks associated with the ALIF procedure include: blood vessel damage, problems with the interbody device or hardware, retrograde ejaculation (in males), deficit or damage to the spinal cord, nerve roots, or nerves, possibly resulting in paralysis or pain. Please contact your physician to discuss all potential risks.