

Argus Orthopaedic Zone

Back Surgery? Uh.....Maybe.

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Almost everyone has “back trouble” at some point during their life. It comes in all shapes and sizes so to speak.

Very lucky is the person over twenty five who has never had significant back trouble.

It can last a few days and be greatly annoying or be there aggravating you for the rest of your life once it starts.

The degree of back problems that humans have is perhaps the price we pay for walking upright. Meaning that the problems we have pertaining to our back are many times more than our animal friends who walk on four legs.

I’m not sitting here telling you the price is too high for gosh sakes! I think mankind has gotten a lot more done walking on two legs than four!

THE BACK IS COMPLEX

Compared with all the other things I deal with as an Orthopaedic Surgeon the back is impossibly complex.

Vertebrae: Cervical 7, Thoracic 12, lumbar 5, sacrum and coccyx. Throw in all the discs, ligaments, nerves, muscles, facet joints etc. The anatomy is complicated and the number of things that can go wrong with a back is a very long list.

The diagnosis of back pain needs to be as precise as possible making treatment much more effective.

SURGERY ??

Spine surgery has become very popular in recent years as more doctors are taking special training in this subspecialty. I’m afraid if you have a hammer (back surgery) everything looks like a nail (patient with back problem). If the doctor makes the potential outcome sound very good, many patients of all ages are saying yes to surgery in hopes it can help them. Frequently it can, if done for very specific reasons like a ruptured disc or spinal stenosis. Occasionally bones in the spine may need to be fused together to try to relieve the back and possibly leg pain.

Just remember, as a surgeon who does back surgery, I’m telling you it can take days, weeks and sometimes months for back symptoms from different conditions to resolve.

But in a very high percent of cases it can resolve with time, rest and then exercise, medication, physical therapy, epidural steroids.

There are very few back conditions that require surgery right away. Beware not being given different choices and time to decide.

Office Website and Argus Orthopaedic Archive

I hope what you have read has raised questions. No problem!

Please log onto www.orthopodsurgeon.com. It has a huge amount of musculoskeletal information in the Website and the Archive of all previous Argus articles.

Check it out and be amazed what you can learn.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you. Be well.

Dr. Haverbush