



# Anterior Cervical Discectomy & Fusion

ACDF Patient Information



## What to Expect

A surgical procedure used to treat nerve root or spinal cord compression in the cervical spine. Learn more about the ACDF procedure and what to expect before, during, and after surgery.

# Conditions

An anterior cervical discectomy and fusion approach is typically performed to treat:

## **Cervical Radiculopathy (Often called a “Pinched Nerve”)**

Involves irritation or compression of the nerve roots in the neck. This may be caused by degenerative changes due to age, herniated disc, or spinal instability. The first symptom is typically pain or muscle stiffness in the neck region. This can be followed by pain in the arms, shoulders, back, and chest and may cause weakness or numbness in the hands, arms, and shoulders.

## **Cervical Myelopathy**

Involves compression of the spinal cord in the neck. This may be caused by a herniated disc, degenerative disc disease (DDD), tumors, osteophytes (bony projections), fracture, or trauma to the cervical spine.

## **Spinal Stenosis**

A condition in which the spinal canal starts to narrow. When the spinal canal narrows, the open spaces between the vertebrae may also start to get smaller and this tightness can pinch the spinal cord or the nerves around it.



# What is an ACDF Procedure?

During an anterior cervical discectomy and fusion (ACDF) procedure, the patient is positioned lying on their back, known as the supine position. To access the cervical spine, the surgeon makes a small incision on the right or left side of the neck.

The surrounding muscles are carefully retracted to expose the surgical area. The trachea, esophagus, and major blood vessels are gently moved aside to provide a clear path to the cervical disc space.

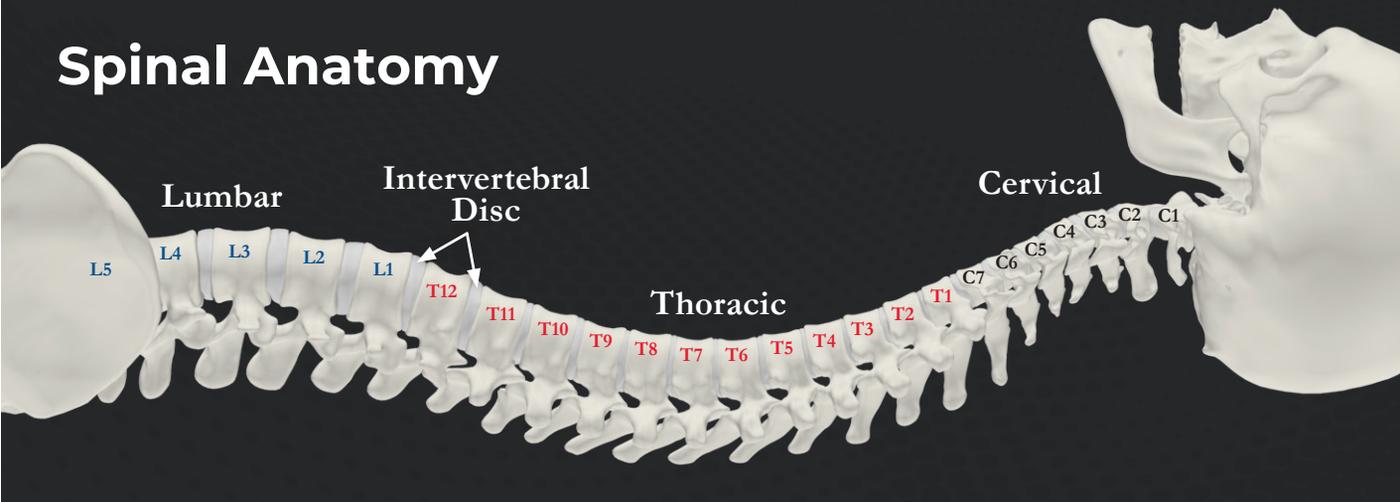
Once the affected disc is identified, it is partially or completely removed. Any bone spurs that may be compressing nearby nerve roots are excised to relieve pressure and improve nerve function.

After the disc is removed, a cervical spacer (also called a cage) is inserted in its place. The cage is commonly filled with a bone graft that may facilitate bone growth (or “fusion”) between the surrounding vertebrae over time. Many cervical cages have osteoconductive properties depending on their surface coat or porosity, which can enhance the bone growth process. In some cases, a small plate and screws are added to provide stabilization.

## Supine Approach

The supine position means the patient is lying on their back, with their face and abdomen facing upwards. The surgery is performed through a small incision so there is less disruption to muscles and surrounding tissue.

# Spinal Anatomy



## Potential Risks

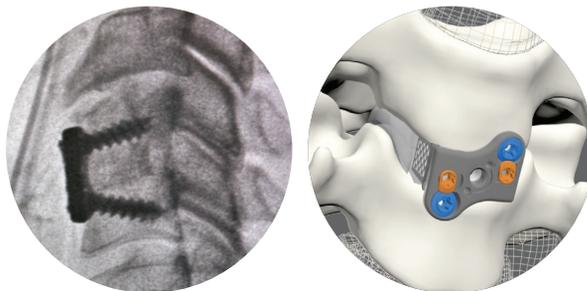
There are possible risks involved with any surgical procedure. Reasonable expectations and compliance with the surgeon's pre- and post-operative instructions are vital.

All aspects of any potential surgery should be thoroughly discussed with your healthcare provider. Potential risks associated with ACDF procedures may include:

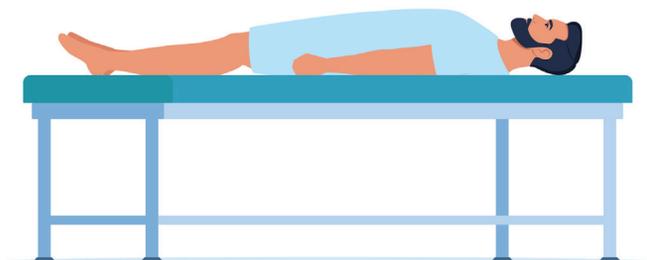
- General surgical complications, such as bleeding, infection, blood clots, or allergic reactions
- Failure of adequate fusion to occur
- Difficulty swallowing, vocal hoarseness, or other issues with the throat and neck.

## Treatment

An ACDF procedure may be an option when non-surgical treatments fail to relieve the patient's symptoms. The primary goals are to relieve pressure on the spinal cord or nerve roots while stabilizing the spine with fusion.



Treatment shown with Zavation's Varisync® Stand-alone Cervical System



Supine Position



ZAVATION®

## Recovery

Each patient's recovery will vary depending on overall health, age, levels of fusion, and if complications arise. Typically patients will stay in the hospital for 1-2 days post-surgery, but some single-level procedures may be outpatient. You may be fitted with a neck brace or cervical collar, and you might experience soreness or discomfort around the incision. Medical staff will monitor your condition to determine your best post-operative care. Each patient's recovery journey will vary.

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