

PLIF: Posterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion

Plif is generally used to treat back or leg pain caused by degenerative disc disease. The surgeon will stabilize the spine by fusing vertebrae together with bone graft material.

Step 1

The procedure is done through a three to six inch incision in the back.

Step 2

Parts of the vertebral bone need to be removed to get access to the disc. Exposed nerve roots and spinal cord will be moved to the side.

Step 3

The damaged disc is partially removed. Some of the disc wall is left behind to help contain the bone graft material.

Step 4

Morselized bone is placed in the empty disc space, realigning the vertebral bones. This also lifts pressure from pinched nerve roots. The area may also be filled with morselized bone.

Step 5

The surgeon may implant a series of screws and rods to the back of the spine for additional support. Bone graft is also placed along the sides of the spine.

End of procedure

The morselized bone graft will grow through and around the implants, forming a bone bridge that connects the vertebral bodies above and below. This solid bone bridge is called a fusion.

