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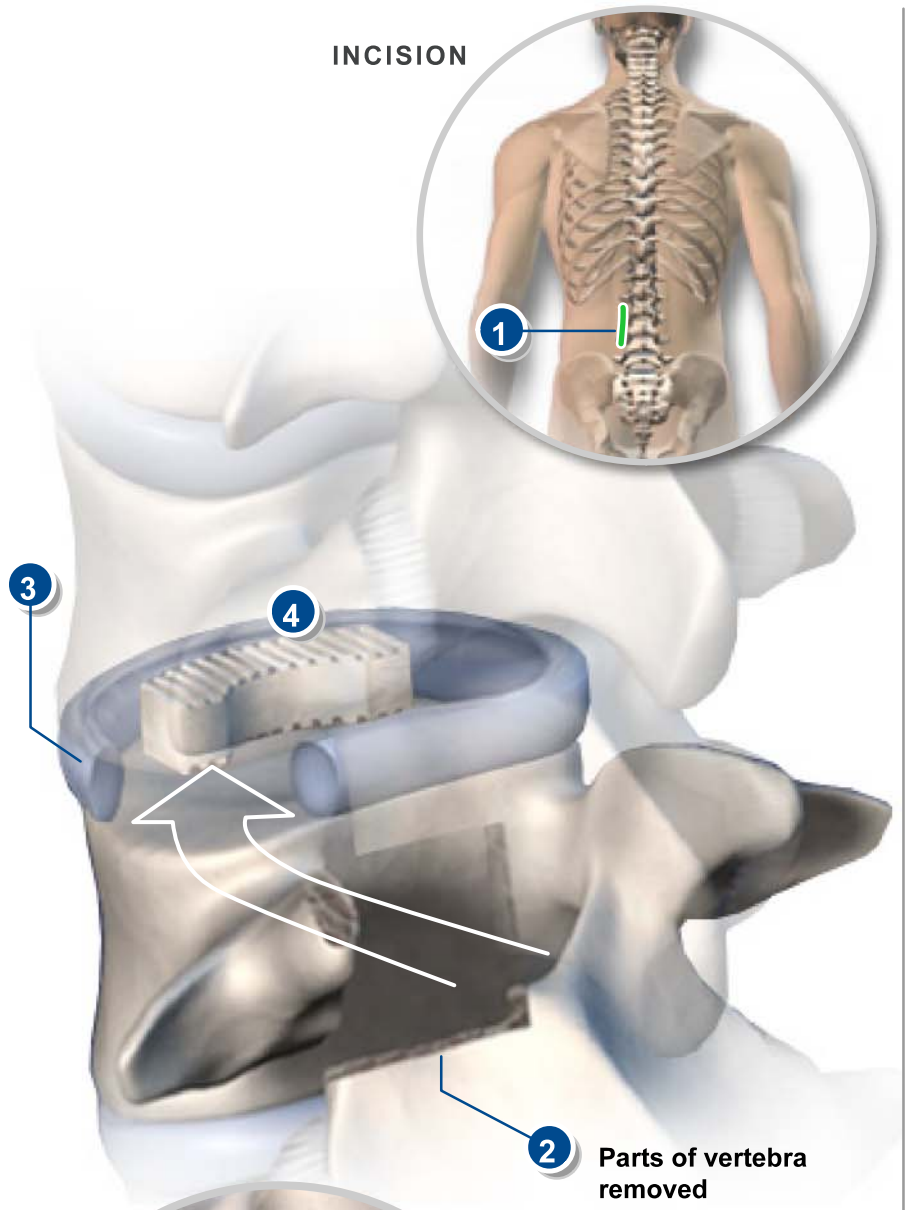
TLIF: Transforaminal Lumbar Interbody Fusion

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



STEP 1

The procedure is performed through one or more small incisions in the back.

STEP 2

Parts of the vertebral bone need to be removed to get access to the disc. Since most TLIF procedures access the disc through only one side of the spine, recovery time after the procedure will be shorter than with traditional fusion surgery.

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

A bone graft is placed into the empty disc space, realigning the vertebral bones and relieving 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 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.