**What Is Slipped Disc (Herniated Disc)?**

The discs are protective shock-absorbing pads between the bones of the spine (vertebrae). The discs of the spine are also referred to as intervertebral discs. Although they do not actually "slip," a disc may bulge, split, or rupture. This can cause the disc cartilage and nearby tissue to fail (herniate), allowing the inner gel portion of the disc to escape into the surrounding tissue. This protruding, jelly-like substance can place pressure on the [spinal cord](https://www.emedicinehealth.com/slideshow_pictures_low_back_pain/article_em.htm) or on an adjacent nerve to cause symptoms of pain, numbness, or weakness either around the damaged disc or anywhere along the area supplied by that nerve.

Many people experience no symptoms from a herniated disc, and the majority of people who have herniated discs do not need surgery.

The layman's term "[slipped disc](https://www.emedicinehealth.com/image-gallery/slipped_disc_picture/images.htm)" is, therefore, a misnomer and actually refers to a condition whereby portions of an abnormal, injured, or degenerated disc have protruded against adjacent nerve tissues. This condition is also known as a slipped disk, herniated disc, ruptured disc, or prolapsed disc. The most frequently affected area is in the low back, but any disc can rupture, including those in the neck.