Facet Syndrome and stenosis vs. Lumbar Disc Herniation
NNMC Bethesda Chiropractic Clinic
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Facet Syndrome/Stenosis

IVF & Canal Stenosis

When reacting to stress, the adult bone structure responds by creating more bone to stabilize the joint space. Injured areas need more support. Ligaments thicken to help accomplish this. Unfortunately creating more bone and ligament takes away space for nerves in the spinal canal and decreases the space where the nerves exit through the intervertebral foramen.

Degenerative Disc Disease

Degenerative disc disease is the precursor to disc herniation. When the spine does not move, the discs are unable to bring in water and nutrition. Lack of nutrition and hydration shrinks the disc and creates small tears in the disc. These tears become weak points through which disc material may herniate when increased positional stress is placed on the disc.

Painful Extension Posture Associated with Stenosis and Lumbar Facet Syndrome

In a normal, healthy joint the space within the joint is clear. The cartilage lining the joint is smooth and uninterrupted. Joints like these move freely and smoothly and are not painful. These joints have good nutrition.

The multifidus

Inactivity is the biggest threat to the spine. Muscles that are not exercised routinely begin to form fatty deposits which severely limit the muscles ability to perform its function.

Pain patterns

Unlike disc injuries, which are most painful in the morning after the disc has rehydrated, IVF and canal stenosis tend to be more painful towards the end of the day as the disc becomes less hydrated and the space available for exiting nerves decreases.

Relief Postures and Movements

Those with lumbar disc derangements find extension to be less painful than flexion. Lumbar disc derangements may respond well to extension exercises.

Painful Flexion

Unlike painful extension posture, painful flexion is often accompanied by pain in the lower back. The spine tends to rotate as the lumbar spine flexes, aggravating facet pain.

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Adjacent structures

Movement of the joint discourages the growth of adhesions. When a joint is in motion for a long period of time the formation of large adhesions are seen. These connections in the joint severely limit motion.

Adhesions form like vines over a closed garden gate. To open the gate you must break up the vines. Adhesions must be broken to restore motion to a joint. Breaking these adhesions will cause mild inflammation and soreness, but will restore motion and nutrition to the joint.

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