

## Back Surgery May Be Worse Than No Surgery At All

Are you considering undergoing surgery for your back pain? Before you do, consider this: Research shows that many patients who undergo surgery for lower back pain (LBP) often have subsequent surgeries for the same condition due to the failure of the initial procedure, which can contribute to further patient disability. Researchers sought to examine whether such patients had poorer general health than those with no history of spine surgery.



The study examined more than 18,000 patients with back pain enrolled at first visit in the National Spine Network (NSN) database from January 1998 – April 2000. Of those patients, 3,632 had a history of low back surgery. Data were derived from a first-visit questionnaire and the Short Form Health Survey (SF-36), both of which were completed by all patients when first evaluated for back pain.

Results showed that patients with a history of lumbar spine surgery fared significantly worse on areas such as physical functioning, general health and mental health compared to those patients with no prior history of spine surgery. “Previous back surgery is associated with significantly worse general health status than those without surgery among patients with low back pain...” the researchers wrote, further noting that “active rehabilitation intervention strategies designed to improve physical and mental well-being should be promoted, as they could have an impact on enhancing positive health outcomes.”

If you suffer from low back pain -- or any kind of pain, for that matter -- think twice before considering surgical options. Instead, consult your doctor of chiropractic for a treatment plan that will not only help reduce your pain but will also preserve your general health for the long term.

### Reference:

Hee HT, Whitecloud III TS, Myers L. The effect of previous low back surgery on general health status. *Spine*, Sept. 1, 2004;29(17):1931-7.

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