



Are You a Candidate for Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery: Comparing Minimally Invasive and Traditional Spine Surgery for Work-Related Injuries

Work-related back injuries occur frequently in the United States. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that over one million workers sustain back injuries each year. Some of these injuries change lives substantially, resulting in limited movement and extensive pain.

If you have a work-related spinal injury and have not yet met with a [spine surgeon in New Jersey](#), you probably wound up here because you're researching surgery options after dealing with infuriating limitations and pain.

You've probably seen the terms "minimally invasive spine surgery" and "traditional spine surgery" without understanding why one works for some spine injury patients but not others.

Here are some quick facts: Minimally invasive spine surgery is a leading treatment option for spinal patient injuries treated with smaller incisions. However, traditional surgery still exists because some patients need a long incision. The following comparison between minimally invasive vs. traditional spine surgery clarifies the differences.

Minimally Invasive vs Traditional Spine Surgery

Both surgeries work on patients with neck and spinal injuries. Patients almost always use surgery as a last resort. Therefore, if you've tried other treatments and none of them have worked, you're considering surgery with good reason. Here are some reasons that one will work better for you than the other.

Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery

Minimally invasive spine surgery (MISS) uses [advanced medical technology](#) that bypasses the need for extensive cutting. For example, MISS lets your surgeon use a tubular retractor on the soft tissues and muscles. This tool removes the need for cutting the muscles and peeling them off the bone.

The surgeon can also use real-time imaging tools to maximize a clear view of the spine. Therefore, surgeons use it when the spinal injury doesn't require a wide, open overview of the back to operate. According to The Cleveland Clinic, MISS treats the following issues:

- Degenerative discs
- Fractures
- Herniated discs
- Infection
- Kyphosis
- Scoliosis
- Spinal column tumors

The Cleveland Clinic lists the following MISS procedures:

- Scoliosis corrective procedures related to various issues
- Herniated disc repair
- Repair and stabilization of vertebral compression fractures
- Spinal fusion

Because the procedure uses less cutting, a patient's risk of infection decreases significantly. A National Institute of Health (NIH) study reports that minimally invasive spine surgery patients reduce their postoperative surgical site infection (SSI) by a noteworthy 7-fold reduction compared to traditional spinal surgery.

Another crucial point: Less cutting means you need less downtime for the cut to heal, even without an infection. Waiting for the incision to heal prolongs your immobility and your return to work. It puts performance-oriented goals, such as competitive sports, out of reach.

Less cutting also means less blood loss, tiny scars instead of one large scar, and a shorter hospital stay. Some patients even go home the next day. Compared to traditional surgery, you will feel less pain, too.

Overall, there is a lot to appreciate about minimally invasive surgery, so much so that you might wonder why surgeons still perform traditional spinal surgery. Here's why.

Traditional Spinal Surgery

Sometimes, a surgeon needs to see the whole spine. This is why traditional spinal surgery remains an option. The large incision permits the surgeon to move muscle out of the way and address the whole of the spine while focusing on specific areas. If several injuries compound your case, you might need traditional spinal surgery.

Penn Medicine reports that traditional spinal surgery treats:

- Advanced disc degeneration
- Spinal instability
- Scoliosis
- Combined spinal injuries

Traditional spinal surgery includes the following procedures:

- Laminectomy
- Lumbar Fusion
- Microdiscectomy

A Cleveland Clinic report highlights the use of screws during a traditional spinal fusion procedure. The severe state of some spines and the use of items like screws show why traditional spine surgery still exists.

Which Surgery Works Better for You

Besides your injury, your health plays a massive role in determining which surgery works better for you. Patients with an extensive history of pain or other injuries might not be candidates for MISS. If you have obesity or type 2 diabetes, you might also need a more extensive procedure.

A qualified spine specialist will review your health history and current spinal injury to decide which surgery you need. However, if you qualify for MISS, consider its benefits:

- Less blood loss because of a less invasive procedure
- A lower infection rate
- Minimized scarring
- Less post-op pain medicine
- A renewed outlook and physicality that is enhanced by a faster recovery

These benefits can help you get back to life --- and work --- in a much more reasonable amount of time.

How to Prepare for MISS

Preparing for MISS involves a set of steps that optimize your health for better surgery and recovery:

Stop smoking: Smoking is bad for your health. It can complicate surgeries extensively. Therefore, stop ASAP.

Other lifestyle changes: Healthy food and reducing or quitting alcohol strengthen your body. Alcohol dehydrates your body and causes your liver to work overtime. You want everything functioning normally before surgery.

Arrange for aftercare: Take the time to recover, even if the recovery is fast. Arrange for people to help you around the house and with errands. Be prepared to take it easy. Now would be a great time to catch up on movies and books, so make a list.

Following other care recommendations: Your surgeon will review the medicines you take and make recommendations about how to adjust them if necessary. You will also receive instructions for who should accompany you to the hospital and about eating/drinking before surgery; follow them exactly.

Contact Grigory Goldberg, MD, for a Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery Consultation

Spine specialist Grigory Goldberg, MD, performs minimally invasive spine surgery in New Jersey. A spine injury drastically impairs your quality of life, so the sooner you book a consultation with Dr. Goldberg, the better. Dr. Goldberg will review your health history and discuss the impact of your injury. He might discover that treatment options other than surgery might work better for you.

However, you need to book an appointment to know.

Our doctors accept most insurance plans, including workers' compensation, no-fault, and PIP (personal injury protection). Same-day appointments may be available.

If you're looking for robotic spine surgery, [find the best robotic spine surgeon in NJ here.](#)

FAQs

How long does minimally invasive spine surgery take?

Minimally invasive spine surgery times range. Spine specialist Grigory Goldberg, MD, can discuss time estimates with you.

How do I know if I'm a good candidate for minimally invasive surgery?

You know you're a good candidate for minimally invasive surgery after a review of your case. A surgeon can perform this for you.

How long is the recovery from minimally invasive spine surgery?

The recovery time for minimally invasive surgery varies. Consult with a spine specialist in NJ to learn more.