

Anterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion (ALIF)

What is it?

Anterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion (ALIF) is a back surgery that involves approaching the spine through an incision in the abdomen. A portion of the affected disc space is removed from the spine and replaced with an implant. Titanium or stainless steel screws and rods may be inserted into the back of the spine to supplement the stability of the entire construct.



Why is it done?

Patients who are suffering from back and/or leg pain are potential candidates for the ALIF procedure. This pain is generally caused by natural degeneration of the disc space.

The Operation

The ALIF back surgery is performed with the patient lying on his or her back.

Incision

The surgeon makes an incision in the patient's abdomen to access the spine. To have a clear view of the spine, the surgeon then retracts the abdominal and vascular structures.



Disc Removal

Once the spine is in view, the surgeon removes a portion of the degenerated disc from the affected disc space.



Material Placement

After this disc material is removed, the surgeon inserts bone graft material into the disc space—such as autograft or INFUSE® Bone Graft contained in a LT-CAGE® Lumbar Tapered Fusion Device — to restore the normal anatomic condition of the spine.

After Surgery

After the surgery, the patient will normally stay in the hospital between 1 to 2 days. The specific time of stay in the hospital will depend on the patient and the surgeon's specific post-operative treatment plan. The patient will normally be up and walking in the hospital by the end of the first day after the surgery. Anterior approaches have the advantage of less immediate post-operative pain and faster recovery.