

Degenerative Disc Disease

What is it? Degenerative disc disease is a condition where the intervertebral discs change or deteriorate as we all age. Everyone over the age of 18, will be subject to some sort of degenerative changes in their spine. With our discs, these changes are somewhat different. First we need to understand what the disc is and what it does. Our intervertebral discs are located between each vertebra throughout our back. They are made up of a gel-like nucleus (nucleus pulposus) in the middle, and a strong outer layer (annulus fibrosus) that contains the nucleus, like a jelly donut. The discs start out at about 80% water when we are young. Since the disc is flexible, like a tough water balloon, it allows movement throughout the spine, cushion, and spacing between each vertebra. However, as we age, these discs lose their hydration; making them less flexible, less tolerant to motion, and decreased in height. All of these changes make the back more susceptible to injury or painful conditions. Even though the discs degenerate as we age, when DDD is the cause of pain, it occurs when we are younger, between the ages of 30 and 55. Once we are older, after 55, the discs are no longer a likely cause of pain. They lose their hydration and become more rigid and tough. Other risk factors can also increase your chance of developing this condition such as smoking. So, if you are a sufferer of degenerative disc disease pain now, don't worry that your pain will continually get worse. In fact, your pain should get better the older you get. What can you do? However, there may be some benefit found now through physical therapy. We can utilize many manual techniques, exercises, and modalities for pain relief. Walking swimming and bicycling are great ways to exercise if this condition affects you. Depending on what your symptoms are, specific exercise programs can be established to help you limit pain and return to work or the hobbies you like to do in your free time. The web address below gives a good illustration of what DDD is. Simply click on the spine button, and then select degenerative disc disease and the animation will show you the progression of the condition.

http://www.understandspinesurgery.com/understand_problem.asp Contact your physician if you are having back pain that is not getting better on its own. If physical therapy is recommended, please choose Excel Physical Therapy. www.ExcelPT.com

About the Author

Therapeutic Recreation and recreation therapy resources including a job bulletin, internship listing, activity and treatment resources, articles.

Source: <http://www.productsherbal.com>