

NEW MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGERY – “JACKS UP” THE SPINE Providing a Fast Relief for Lumbar Spinal Stenosis

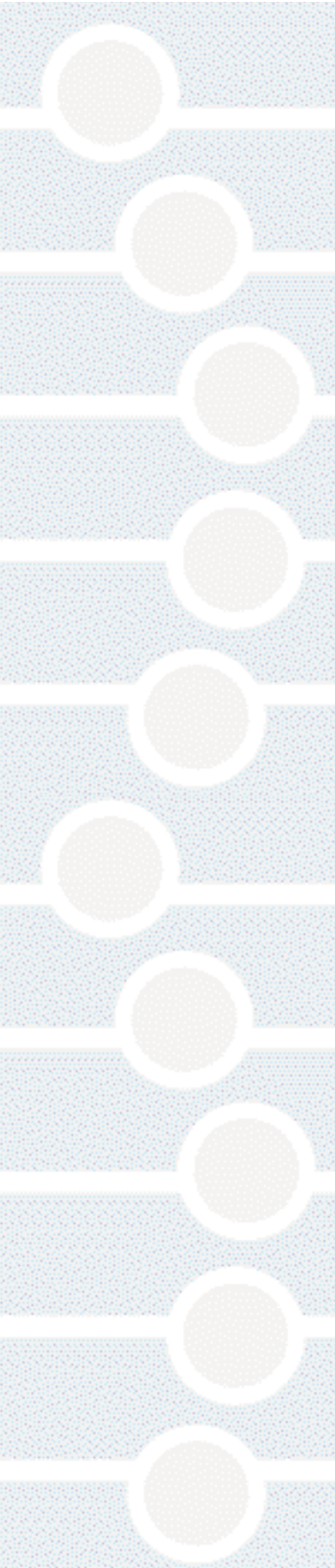
INDIANAPOLIS (FEBRUARY 22, 2006) - Yesterday, Rick C. Sasso, M.D., was the first surgeon in Indianapolis to perform minimally invasive spine surgery for the treatment of lumbar spinal stenosis (LSS). The Food and Drug Administration recently approved this new procedure, performed at St. Vincent Indianapolis Hospital. LSS is one of the most common reasons for spine surgery in adults aged 50 and older, according to the Dartmouth Atlas of Spinal Disorders.

This new minimally invasive procedure involves the surgical placement of an implant called X STOP[®], which is made of a titanium alloy. This implant is placed in the affected lumbar area of the spine. Once inserted, it decompresses the affected spinal canal area, which has narrowed as a result of LSS. The X STOP is designed to open up the canal and limit extension of the lumbar spine, taking the pressure off of the nerves to the legs, thereby relieving symptoms. “This new procedure fills a gap in the continuum of care that, until now, required my patients to make the leap from conservative therapies, such as analgesics and injections, straight to invasive surgery,” said Rick Sasso, M.D., an orthopaedic spine surgeon with Indiana Spine Group.

The current standard of surgical care, laminectomy, is an invasive procedure that requires general anesthesia and involves removing parts of the bone and tissue that are narrowing the spinal canal. Often, laminectomy is not an option for patients. Many are unwilling to undergo an invasive/irreversible procedure and/or cannot tolerate general anesthesia because of their age and other health conditions. Advantages of this new procedure include: minimally invasive procedure, a general anesthetic is not required, there is no bone or soft tissue removal, reduced risk of infection and rapid patient recovery. Although recently approved for use in the U.S., this implant has been used in Japan and Europe since 2001 and has successfully treated more than 4,000 patients.

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Providing the full spectrum of spine care



LSS is a common spinal problem suffered mainly by the middle-aged and elderly population and is often associated with debilitating pain in the back and legs. Until recently, LSS patients had limited options for relieving the symptoms associated with the disease. “With the graying of America, and the prevalence of LSS in the older population, I would imagine the popularity of this new technique will increase tremendously,” adds Dr. Sasso. Until two years ago, 82-year-old Betty Strange was active. “I am very involved with my family and was always on the go. I even swam laps for one hour everyday.” Now affected with LSS, Strange has problems with walking and uses a cane. She is looking forward to regaining her mobility once she recovers from minimally invasive spine surgery, which she underwent on Feb. 21.

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Rick C. Sasso, M.D., is a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon who specializes in orthopaedic spine surgery. An internationally renowned speaker, Dr. Sasso is involved in research and development of spinal implants and techniques of minimally invasive spine surgery. His professional memberships include the American College of Surgeons, North American Spine Society, Scoliosis Research Society, and the Cervical Spine Research Society.

St. Vincent Indianapolis Hospital, one of the largest healthcare systems in Indiana, is dedicated to spiritually centered, holistic care, which sustains and improves the health of individuals and communities. St. Vincent Health is a member of Ascension Health, the largest Catholic healthcare system in the country.