

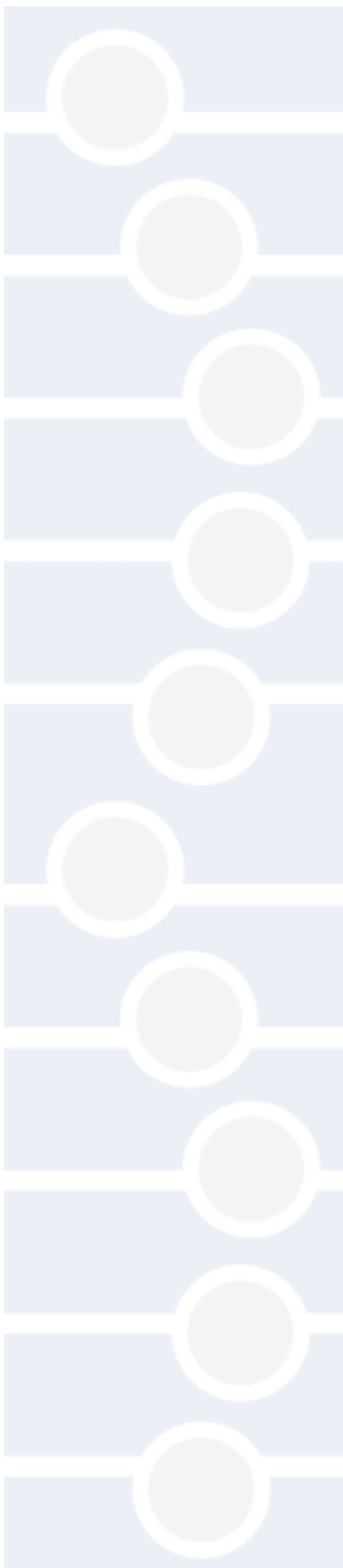
A “New” Back for School - Literally

Patients benefit from artificial lumbar disc

INDIANAPOLIS, IN - OCTOBER 5, 2004 - Earlier this year, graduate students Angela Allsup and Marianne Lesh were dreading classes. As a result of degenerative disc disease, both students were suffering from debilitating back pain that severely limited their physical activities. Even going to class was very painful. “I was in constant pain and had no feeling in my left leg,” states Angela Allsup. “I had dropped a class and was worried about completing the semester,” she adds.

This summer both Angela and Marianne participated in an ongoing clinical research study and received artificial lumbar discs. This fall, both Angela and Marianne have not only gone back to school but they are walking up to two to three miles a day and are no longer suffering from chronic pain that had left them incapacitated prior to surgery.

Spine surgeons with Indiana Spine Group at St.Vincent are participating in a study that is measuring the effectiveness of artificial lumbar discs in the treatment of degenerative disc disease as an alternative to standard fusion surgery. The artificial lumbar disc patients benefit from shorter recovery time, less post-operative pain and the ability to return to normal activities with full motion within weeks of surgery. “This new procedure provides a superior alternative to the standard spinal fusion. The damaged disc is replaced with an artificial disc, and this artificial disc allows normal joint motion which cannot be duplicated with a fusion,” states Rick Sasso, M.D. a spine surgeon with Indiana Spine Group. “For patients who are active, this is a critical factor when considering surgery,” Sasso continues.



Twenty-year old, Angela Allsup had always been very active until earlier this year when she was sidelined in her activities. As a high school student, she played on the basketball team and suffered an injury after a fall at a pickup game. When starting college, her problems evolved and created a lot of pain - resulting in no physical activity. Since her lumbar disc replacement surgery earlier this summer, Angela has returned to Butler as a first-year pharmacy student. As she continues to heal, she is now walking several miles a day, rides her bike and even plays a little basketball.

Also suffering from degenerative disc disease was Marianne Lesh. She traces her condition to high school gymnastics. Marianne suffered from sciatic pain in both of her legs since she was 16 years old. Now 33 and a veterinary student at Purdue University, Marianne is feeling great following her surgery this July. Prior to surgery, Marianne was in constant pain, missed a lot of classes and had stopped all physical activity. "Since my surgery, I feel incredible," Marianne says.

During this study, surgeons with Indiana Spine Group have performed over 40 lumbar disc replacements. "Overall, this new technology has been a great success. In the future, artificial discs will become the gold standard of care," predicts Dr. Sasso. It is expected that the FDA will approve a lumbar artificial disc later this year.

Dr. Rick Sasso is a board-certified spine surgeon with Indiana Spine Group at St. Vincent in Indianapolis. Indiana Spine Group is dedicated to comprehensive diagnostic and surgical care of the spine - including both neck and spine. Surgeons with Indiana Spine Group perform, develop and refine the newest techniques for traditionally and minimally invasive surgery and microsurgery.

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.