

How the MILD Procedure Works

1. **Imaging Guidance:** The procedure is performed under fluoroscopic guidance (live X-ray) to ensure precision.
2. **Small Incision:** A tiny incision, usually less than 1 cm, is made in the lower back.
3. **Specialized Instruments:** Using specialized tools, the surgeon removes small amounts of bone and excess ligament tissue that are causing the narrowing of the spinal canal.
4. **No General Anesthesia Required:** The procedure is typically done under local anesthesia with sedation, rather than general anesthesia.
5. **Outpatient Basis:** MILD is usually an outpatient procedure, meaning patients can go home the same day.

Indications for MILD

The MILD procedure is indicated for patients with lumbar spinal stenosis who:

- Have significant lower back and leg pain, especially when standing or walking.
- Have not found sufficient relief from conservative treatments such as physical therapy, medications, or steroid injections.
- Prefer a minimally invasive option over traditional open surgery.

Benefits of MILD

- **Minimally Invasive:** Small incision and minimal tissue disruption lead to quicker recovery times.
- **Outpatient Procedure:** Typically does not require an overnight hospital stay.
- **Reduced Pain:** Effective in reducing pain and improving function in patients with lumbar spinal stenosis.
- **Lower Risk:** Fewer complications compared to more invasive spinal surgeries.

Risks and Considerations

As with any medical procedure, there are potential risks and considerations, including:

- **Infection:** Risk of infection at the incision site.
- **Bleeding:** Minimal risk of bleeding.
- **Nerve Injury:** Rare but possible risk of nerve damage.
- **Incomplete Relief:** Some patients may not experience complete symptom relief.

Post-Procedure Care

- **Activity Limitations:** Patients may need to avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activities for a short period after the procedure.
- **Follow-Up Appointments:** Regular follow-ups with the physician to monitor recovery and address any concerns.
- **Physical Therapy:** May be recommended to strengthen the back and improve mobility.

Conclusion

Minimally Invasive Lumbar Decompression (MILD) is an effective, low-risk option for patients with lumbar spinal stenosis who have not responded to conservative treatments. By relieving pressure on the spinal nerves through a small incision and minimal tissue removal, MILD offers significant pain relief and improved function with a quicker recovery time compared to traditional spinal surgery. If you are experiencing symptoms of lumbar spinal stenosis, consult with a spine specialist to determine if the MILD procedure is appropriate for your condition.