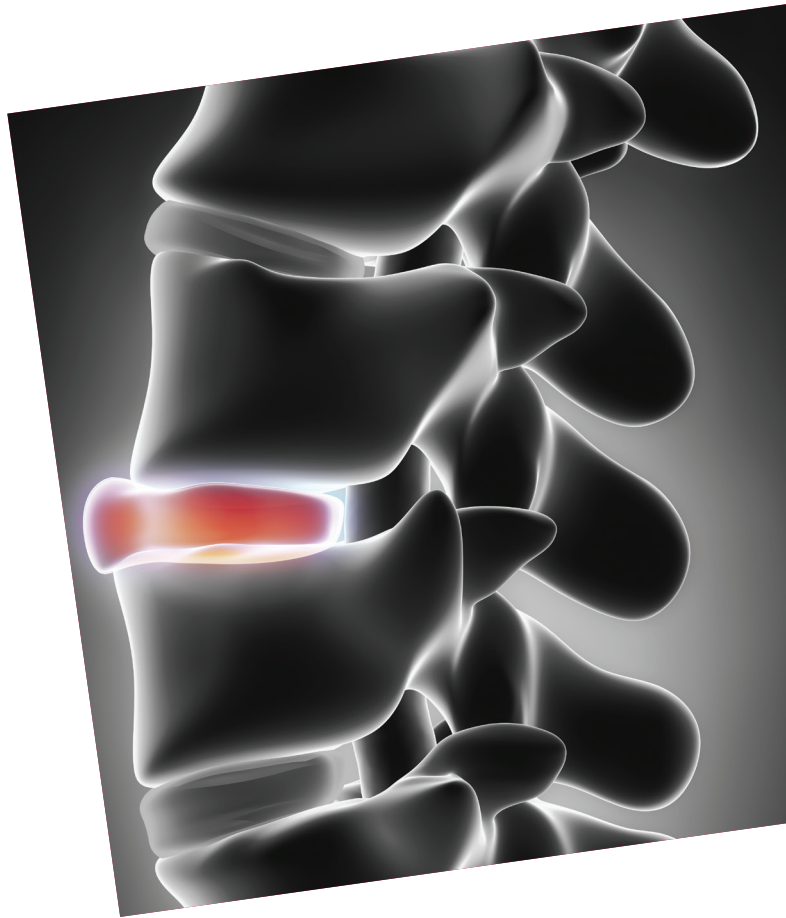


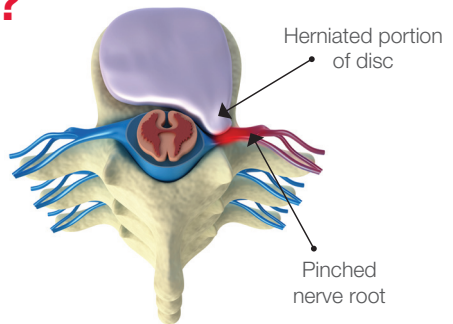
# Prolapsed Intervertebral Disc (Slipped Disc)



The Department of Orthopaedics offers specialist medical and surgical treatments on musculoskeletal disorders, joint replacements, foot and ankle disorders, among other trauma injuries. Our consultants and surgeons work closely with sports medicine physicians, physiotherapists, podiatrists and other healthcare professionals to help patients return to their normal activities after surgery.

## What is a slipped disc?

A slipped disc occurs when a piece of the intervertebral disc bulges or protrudes out. It may result in compression of the nerves to the leg.



**The affected disc**

## What are the symptoms of a slipped disc?

You may experience back pain at the time of disc protrusion.

When the disc compresses a nerve to the leg, you will experience pain that shoots down your affected leg. You may also feel numbness and a tingling sensation in your leg. In more severe cases, there may be weakness in the ankle or toes.

## How is a diagnosis made?

A doctor will conduct a neurological examination to determine if there is nerve compression. An MRI scan of the lumbar spine will indicate where the disc has prolapsed.

## What are the treatment options?

Most patients with a slipped disc will have their symptoms treated with analgesia (painkiller) and physiotherapy. The majority of patients get better this way. Patients who still experience pain despite analgesia and physiotherapy, may consider surgical options.

## What are the surgical options?

Most surgeons will recommend a discectomy to remove the disc material that has protruded. This involves making a small incision in the back of the spine where the disc is located to remove the bone covering the nerves and the disc.

## What are the potential complications?

Complications can be categorised into general and procedure-specific.

**General complications** are risks associated with surgical procedures such as complications from anaesthesia, a heart attack, stroke, pneumonia, blood clots developing in the lower limbs (deep-vein thrombosis) and blood clots moving to the lung (pulmonary embolism).

**Specific complications** are associated with the procedure itself, and include wound infection, injury of lumbar nerve roots (resulting in foot drop), tears of the dura covering the nerve root (resulting in spinal fluid leakage) and recurrent disc prolapse.

## How do I prepare for surgery?

You may have to be reviewed by an anaesthetist to determine if you are medically-fit for anaesthesia. A nurse will counsel you on the reporting date and time, and when to start fasting for surgery. If you are on blood-thinning medication (e.g. aspirin, plavix, ticlid, warfarin), they will advise you when to stop taking them. A financial counsellor will also advise you on the estimated costs and type of funding options (where applicable).



## After surgery

The surgery takes between one to two hours to perform. This does not include the time taken by an anaesthetist to prepare you for the surgery, and the time spent in the recovery area.

After surgery, you may have a drain inserted into your wound to remove excess blood from your wound. You may experience pain but this can be controlled by painkillers and will settle in a day or two.

You should also be able to stand up and walk as early as the day of the surgery. Most patients also feel well enough to go home the day after surgery.

The wound will take about 10 to 14 days to heal.

You should be able to return to work about two to four weeks after surgery.

Avoid lifting heavy objects or bending your lower back for the first three months after surgery.



## For more information

### Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Jurong Community Hospital

1 Jurong East St 21, Singapore 609606

[www.ntfgh.com.sg](http://www.ntfgh.com.sg) | [www.jch.com.sg](http://www.jch.com.sg)

### Clinic opening hours

Monday – Friday: 8.30am – 5.30pm

Saturday: 8.30am – 12.30pm (Selected clinics only\*)

Dental Clinic: Monday – Thursday: 8.00am – 5.30pm, Friday: 8.00am – 5.00pm

\*Please refer to our websites for more details.

### General enquiries & appointments

General enquiries line: 6908 2222 (24-hr)

Fax: 6716 5500 | Email: [contactus@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:contactus@nuhs.edu.sg)

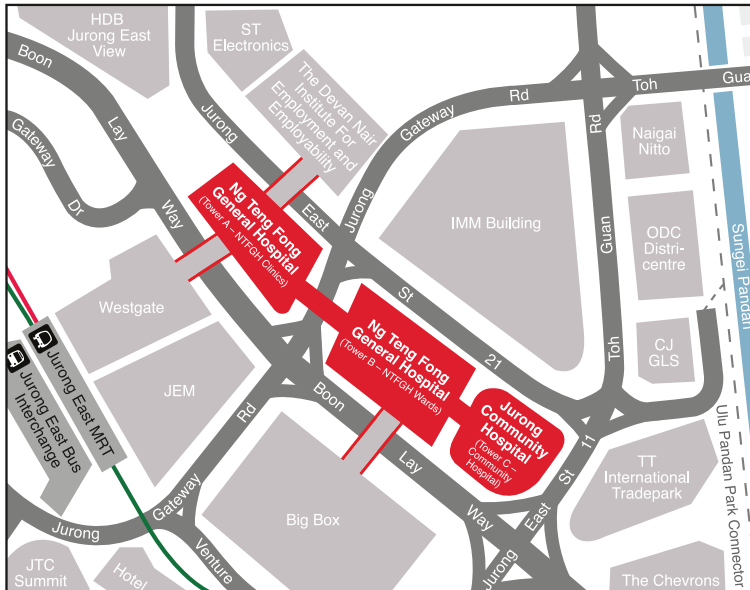
Appointment line: 6908 2222 (Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 5.30pm, Saturday: 8.00am – 12.30pm)

Fax: 6716 2200 | Email: [appointment@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:appointment@nuhs.edu.sg)

Dental appointment line: 6716 2233 (Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 5.30pm)

Fax: 6716 2200 | Email: [JHCampus\\_Dental@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:JHCampus_Dental@nuhs.edu.sg)

## Getting there



### By train

Alight at Jurong East MRT Station

### By bus

#### Jurong East Bus Interchange

41, 49, 51, 52, 66, 66B, 78, 78A, 79, 79A, 97, 97E, 98, 98M, 105, 143, 143M, 160, 160A, 160M, 183, 183B, 197, 333, 334, 335, 506

#### Along Boon Lay Way

49, 99, 333, Private bus service 625, 990

### Disclaimer:

The information in this brochure is meant for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek your doctor's advice before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition. Information is accurate at the time of printing.