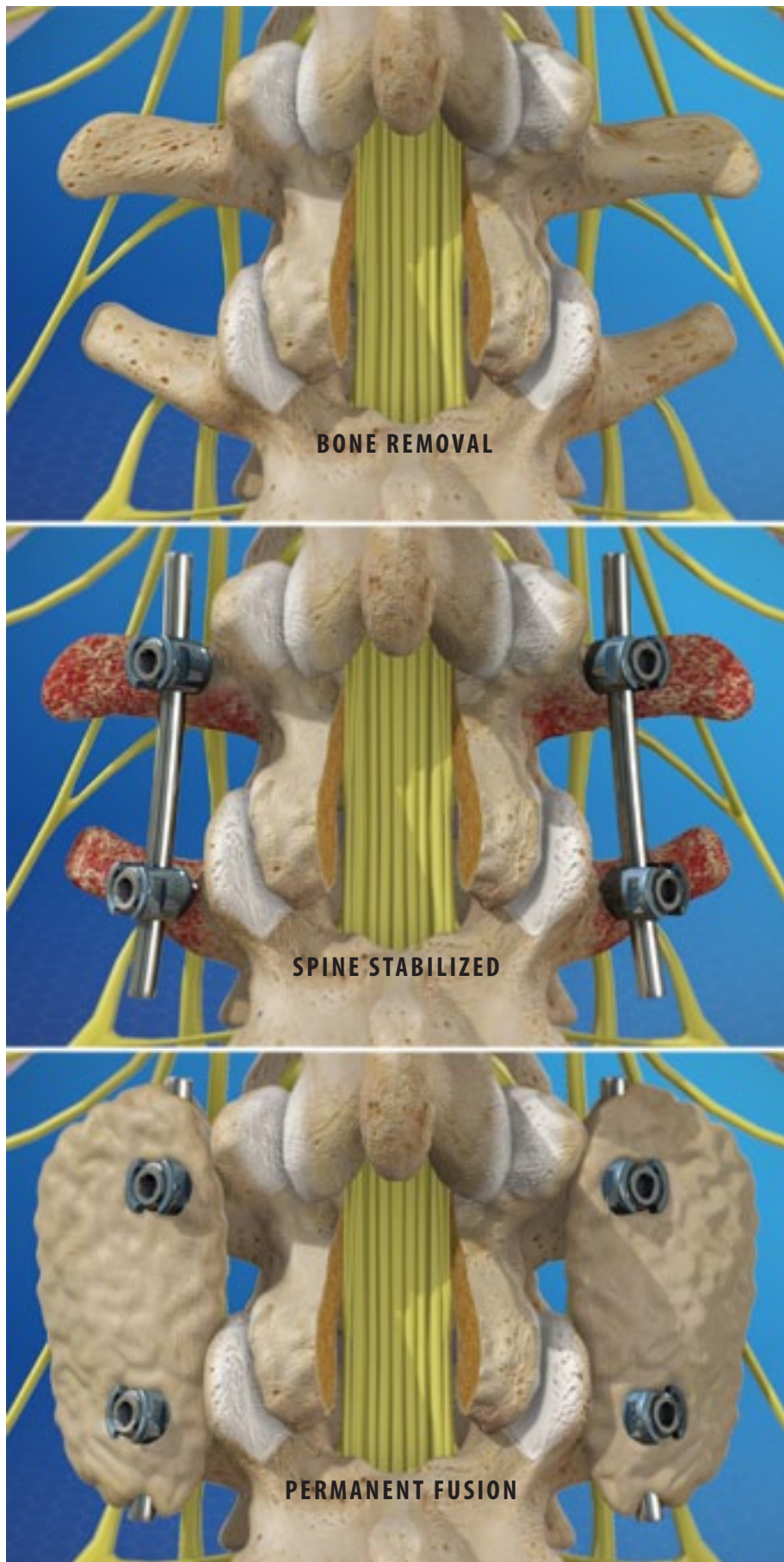


Spinal Fusion (Lumbar)



Overview

In many spinal surgeries, two or more vertebral bones are permanently joined with a technique called "spinal fusion." A fusion creates a solid mass of bone. It stabilizes your spine.

Preparation

In preparation for the procedure, you are positioned and anesthetized. The surgeon makes an incision in your skin. The tissues are gently moved aside to create a path to your spine.

Bone Removal

If your fusion is being performed as part of a procedure to relieve pressure on your spinal nerves, your spine may need to be modified. Your surgeon may remove part or all of the lamina from one or more vertebrae. Removing this bone creates more space for the spinal nerves. If bony growths are pressing against your nerves, your surgeon removes these as well.

Graft Inserted

To create the fusion, your surgeon uses bone graft. This graft can be taken from your own hip. It can also come from a donor. The surgeon removes some bone from the surface of your vertebrae to create a bed where this graft can grow.

Spine Stabilized

The surgeon stabilizes your spine. This involves implanting hardware to lock the vertebrae together. Many devices are available. Your surgeon may use screws and rods, plates, or other devices. Finally, the graft is placed against your vertebrae.

End of Procedure

When the procedure is complete, the incision is closed. You may be placed in a brace to support your spine. In the weeks after the surgery, new bone grows and attaches securely to the spine. This creates a permanent fusion. You may benefit from physical therapy as you heal.