

Degenerative discs common with aging

Question: What is a degenerative disc condition?

Answer: A degenerative disc is a condition where the disc between any two consecutive vertebrae breakdown and erode. The boney surface of the vertebra itself will get arthritic with spurs and/or the fluid-filled disc will diminish in height do to dehydration. A minimal amount of degeneration is expected as we age and the body can usually adapt to this normal progression of aging. Excessive build-up or plaguing of bone matrix can interfere with normal movement of one vertebra upon another. This action can cause friction, which results in inflammation. The resultant inflammation secondary to the degenerative arthritis is what irritates the nerves that cause pain, achiness and loss of range of motion.

Clinically degenerative disc conditions occur more often in the low back but can occur in the neck and mid back. Exceeded degeneration is common after trauma to the spine. A classic scenario of degeneration secondary to trauma would be a motor vehicle whiplash accident. The sprain and strain to muscles and ligaments cause the inflammation to remain static in the disc when motion is diminished. If motion is not restored as soon as possible the dead inflamed tissue becomes layered on the bone of the vertebra. This is why after any musculo-skeletal injury you should get motion back into the injured joint or tissue.

Degenerative disc conditions are commonly associated with back or neck pain. Chiropractic is an excellent option to restore motion back to the vertebra and in many cases minimize discomfort.

Quote of the week: *“Trust your instinct. Your mistakes might as well be your own, instead of someone else’s.”* — Billy Wilder