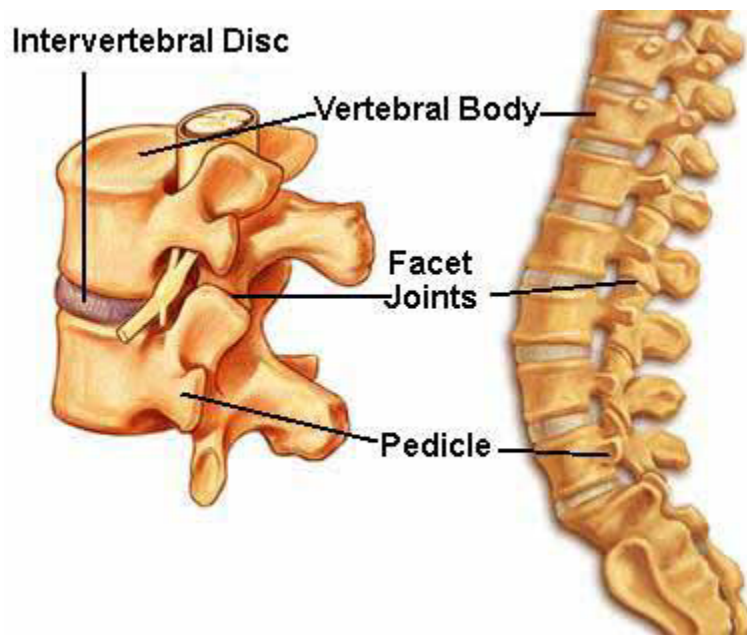


## ABOUT DISC REPLACEMENTS .....

There are many reasons for back pain and approximately 80 percent of people will have low back pain at some point in their lives. Very few people with low back pain have a serious problem that requires surgery. Most low back pain symptoms get better with conservative management consisting of time, anti-inflammatories, and exercises. Causes of low back pain include bulging/herniated discs, muscle strains, spinal stenosis, or degenerative disc disease. For patients with degenerative disc disease who fail at least six months of conservative management, disc replacement may be the solution. The FDA has recently allowed disc replacement surgery in the United States.

Degenerative disc disease is the loss of water content and tearing of the disc and while some of this is due to natural aging, a certain percentage of people have more rapid deterioration due to trauma or genetics. Until recently, fusion was the only surgical answer to patients with such pain. Artificial disc replacement is the actual removal of the disc through an incision made through the abdomen and implanting the prosthesis (artificial disc) between the two vertebral bodies.



The Charite disc was developed in Berlin, Germany by orthopedic surgeons. The FDA approved the disc in the fall of 2004 after review of two year US clinical trials. This disc, however, has been used in Europe for over 15 years in thousands of patients. The disc replacement is a three piece device consisting of a plastic core sandwiched by cobalt chromium alloy endplates. The endplates have prongs that grab onto the vertebral body. Between 0 to 21 degrees of motion is possible with bending backward and forward with the disc.



The longevity of the disc replacements is unknown although some have been functioning for over 17 years. Disc replacement is only available in the US for one level in the lumbar spine and cervical disc replacements are not currently available in the US. For more information on disc replacements call the spine surgeons at Potomac Valley or visit our website at [www.pvoac.com](http://www.pvoac.com).