



Andrew M Cash, MD: Orthopedic Spine Surgeon-Desert Institute of Spine Care

LASER SPINE SURGERY:

Your back hurts!
And you're looking for a treatment that will make the pain stop.
You've read about Laser Spine Surgery, and you're interested in how it may help relieve your back pain.

There's been lots of press about Laser Spine Surgery. And, while it can help some back conditions and it does benefit some people, it seems to benefit those with only minor spine problems.

What IS Laser Spine Surgery?

Laser spine surgery uses a laser to remove tissue with heat rather than with traditional instruments. While it may be seen as "modern" or a "magic bullet", in truth, the use of lasers has been around for a long time. Lasers use a focused beam of light to cut soft tissue.

What are the PROS:

- It's Minimally Invasive
- Fast Recovery Time
- For Minor Conditions, Laser Spine Surgery Can Be Effective

What are the CONS:

- For most painful back conditions, Laser Spine Surgery is Not Effective
- Laser spine surgery can truly only be used for a very small number of minor spine conditions.

- Laser surgery can result in a procedure which does not completely address or alleviate the problem (inadequate operation), which sometimes means you'll need additional surgery.
- Pain may be from back instability. Laser surgery does not address or alleviate this condition. The basic problem is missed.



- Using a laser during surgery can sometimes limit nerve damage. But in the hands of an inexperienced surgeon, a laser can actually increase the chances of tissue or nerve damage,
- Using a Laser Scalpel can be less effective and pose more risk than other minimally invasive procedures.
- The heat from the laser can damage adjacent nerves and lead to increased pain
- Laser Spine Surgery is not taught in medical schools and is not considered

a viable approach to spine surgery by medical advisory boards.

- Laser Spine Surgery is generally not covered by health insurance.

A very important consideration:

Laser Spine Surgery does not have to be performed by a Spine Surgeon. Practitioners who do not have the education, experience or understanding of the anatomy and function of the spine can legally perform Laser Spine Surgery.

A wise plan of action is to have an exam and consultation with a Spine Surgeon who is both Board-Certified and Fellowship Trained. At that exam, your spine surgeon can explain all options available for treatment of your particular (and unique) condition.

Before committing to any spinal procedure, it's wise to consider non-surgical options such as physical therapy, medication, and supervised exercise.

If surgery is indicated, explore all options available, including minimally invasive procedures that offer the benefits of less post-procedure pain and shorter recovery time.

Statistics prove, more complicated back problems often require traditional surgery for the best outcome.

Andrew M Cash, MD is a board-certified and fellowship-trained orthopedic spine surgeon who began practice in Las Vegas in 2006. Dr. Cash is the founder and director of the Desert Institute of Spine Care and the Minimally Invasive Center of Excellence (MICOE). He studied under Dr. Robert Watkins, a world-renowned spine surgeon who operated on countless professional, collegiate and Olympic athletes.

Prior to his Spine Fellowship, Dr. Cash completed a five-year orthopedic surgery residency at the Atlanta Medical Center and received his medical degree from the prestigious University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

