

OH, MY SLIPPED DISC!

By Dr. Derek Conte

Spring is here and like many in the fair Jonquil City of Smyrna, you have already been preparing for the dazzlingly colorful days ahead. The feathery pink cherry blossoms awaken and energize you for this most productive of seasons. At the nursery you load up the mulch, manure, shrubs and trees with heavy root balls. Raking, weeding, digging and fertilizing, a "twinge" is felt in your back that alarms you, but it quickly quiets down and you keep working. Later that night or the next morning you are frozen with low back pain, unable even to rise from bed.

The lifting, bending and twisting motions used in yard work are a perfect recipe for what we know as a "slipped disc" or disc bulge. But what has really happened here? The *intervertebral disc*, or *IVD*, is a tough, flexible cushion between each bone of the spine which permits movement and provides support. Disc bulges usually arise from *gradual wear and tear over time* and rarely from a single traumatic event.

Old accidents and injuries cause minor postural changes making the spine and discs unbalanced, unstable and far more

prone to repeated *micro-tears*, with each event accumulating more damage. Beginning as brief episodes of pain coming months or years apart, the episodes progress until the pain just doesn't go away anymore. But this can be corrected.

Think of the disc as car tire which has not been balanced or aligned properly. With daily use and the rubbing of the road under the great weight of the car, a bubble emerges at the weakest point in the tire. This bulging part of the disc can press on the sciatic nerve, sending bolts of pain along its path from the back to the butt and into the leg, feet and toes. Numbness and tingling appear with continued nerve pressure. Later, muscle size and strength, balance and vibratory sense deteriorate and drugs or surgery are contemplated.

There is, however, a simpler, safer and much more elegant solution to the problem. Think of that tire analogy again. If we align and balance the tires we get a smooth, solid foundation able to tolerate great stresses over a lifetime.

Dr. Derek Conte is a founding member of Marietta Chiropractic Specialists and is available to speak to your school, club or business on health issues



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