

Eisenhower Surgeon Performs First Artificial Disc Surgery



Armen Khachatryan, MD, performs the first cervical artificial disc replacement at Eisenhower Medical Center.

On July 7, Eisenhower Medical Center's Armen Khachatryan, MD, performed the first cervical (neck) artificial disc surgery in the Coachella Valley. Dr. Khachatryan and Eisenhower's David Tahernia, MD, Board Certified Orthopedic Surgeons and Co-Directors of the Comprehensive Spine Center at Desert Orthopedic Center, are participating in a nationwide clinical study to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of the artificial cervical disc.

One of Three in California The artificial cervical disc procedure is currently available at only a dozen FDA-approved sites throughout the United States. Eisenhower Medical Center is one of only three facilities in California selected to participate in the trial. The study, approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in February, will compare artificial disc replacement with the traditional surgical procedure that involves removing the affected disc and fusing the cervical bones.

The Study Cervical disc degeneration occurs through the natural aging process or injury and can result in compressed nerves causing symptoms such as neck, shoulder or arm pain, and neurological deficits.

Patients must meet stringent criteria for participation in the study. If they are considered to be appropriate candidates for surgery, they are randomly placed in either an experimental or a control group. Patients in the experimental group receive the artificial cervical disc, and those in the control group undergo the standard disc removal and cervical fusion procedure.

Relieves Pain, Preserves Motion Anticipated clinical results are that the artificial disc will provide faster recovery time, relieve pain in the neck or arm, provide greater range of motion, and prevent "wear and tear" and degeneration of adjacent areas of the cervical spine. "We have been performing lumbar disc replacement for some time," explains Dr. Khachatryan. "It is exciting to be able to offer a similar procedure for the neck which not only relieves pain, but retains motion and flexibility, and has a faster recovery time than fusion surgery."