

NEWS / What Is The Posterior Annular Tear? How Can It Be Healed?

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Posterior annular tears, ruptures in the spine's intervertebral discs, commonly arise from aging or external stressors. These tears, categorized as peripheral, radial, or concentric, can cause pain by allowing disc material to press on nerves. Diagnosis often involves imaging scans like MRIs. Treatment opti ... [Read More](#)



A posterior annular tear is a painful condition characterized by tear or rupture in the annulus fibrosus (outer layer of an intervertebral disc, particularly in the posterior (back) region of the disc. The cushion-like structures called intervertebral discs serve as shock absorbers in the space between the vertebrae in the spine.

Know Causes and Contributing Factors

This type of degenerative condition develops in the spine naturally with advancing age or through external factors, including injury or abnormal stress on the spine. An annular tear occurs when stress causes a disc's typically thick outer layer to tear. The soft inner "jelly" (nucleus pulposus) may leak out from the disc's interior after an annular tear. Due to additional pressure, this condition may progress to herniated disc. If this leakage occurs on the rear side of the disc, the leaked nucleus pulposus can put pressure against the nearby nerve roots, resulting in a "pinched nerve".

Are There Different Types of Posterior Annular Tears?

Annular tears are of three different types:

Peripheral tears: These are formed when there is tearing of tough outer fibers of the disc. This usually happens due to a traumatic injury or bone spur. These tears may consequently lead to disc degeneration and may require timely medical treatment.

Radial Tears: These are formed in the inner portion of the disc and spread outward. This condition usually develops due to advancing age. A herniated disc could develop if the tear extends to the disc's outermost layer.

Concentric tears: These tears are formed in a circular pattern in the outer layers of the disc. These types of tears are often caused by disc injuries.

How are Diagnostic Aids for Annular Tears?

An experienced spine specialist can diagnose an annular tear through a comprehensive physical examination. During this evaluation, your doctor may also recommend additional imaging studies, such as an MRI or CT scan, to confirm the presence of an annular tear and to provide guidance on suitable treatment options.

What Treatment Options are Available for an Annular Tear?

Annular tear treatment varies based on the severity of the tear and the symptoms experienced. Common treatment options include:

- Rhizotomy/RF Ablation
- Anti-inflammatory Medications
- Physical Therapy
- Steroid Injections
- Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery
- Spinal Fusion or Other Surgical Interventions

Are There Prevention or Self-Care Tips for Annular Tears?

Adopting a healthy lifestyle and taking proactive steps to safeguard your spine. Here are some tips:

- Maintain a healthy weight to minimize stress on the spine.
- Engage in regular exercise to strengthen the muscles supporting the spine.
- Practice good posture helps to minimize unnecessary strain on the spine.
- Avoid smoking to minimize spinal degeneration by limiting blood flow to spinal tissues.
- Limit alcohol and caffeine to enhance overall spinal health.

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