



## Spine Surgeon Robert Berkowitz, MD, at Northeast Ohio's Center for Orthopedics Now Offers Neck Disc Replacement Surgery

*Board-certified orthopedic surgeon Robert Berkowitz, MD, of The Center for Orthopedics in Sheffield Village, Ohio, is one of the first surgeons to offer neck disc replacement -- an alternative to spinal fusion surgery. Dr. Berkowitz uses the Prestige® cervical disc, the first artificial disc for the neck approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.*

Sheffield Village, Ohio ([PRWEB](#)) May 7, 2009 -- For patients with a herniated or diseased neck disc, [neck disc replacement surgery](#) is a new alternative that can help preserve motion in the neck -- and may avoid the need for future surgery.

[Robert Berkowitz, MD](#), a board-certified spine surgeon at [The Center for Orthopedics](#) in Sheffield Village, Ohio, just west of Cleveland, is the first and only physician in Lorain County and Western Cuyahoga County, Ohio, to perform cervical (upper-spine) disc replacement surgery.

Until now, patients who suffered from a herniated disc in their neck had essentially one surgical choice: surgical removal of the disc -- a discectomy -- accompanied by a fusion of the vertebrae above and below the removed disc. But spinal fusion surgery has two drawbacks: a restriction of neck motion, and increased wear and tear on the adjacent discs, which could necessitate future disc surgery.

"Disc replacement is intended to maintain a normal range of motion in the neck and may prevent breakdown of the adjacent discs," says Dr. Berkowitz. "If you fuse one disc, or level, in the spine, the levels above it and below it are exposed to higher forces -- so they tend to break down quicker."

"The theory behind disc-replacement surgery is that if you preserve motion in the level you're doing surgery on, you will help prevent the increased wearing out of the levels above and below it -- and thus help avoid the need for future disc surgery," he explains.

Nancy Hughes, 45, of Elyria, Ohio, was the first patient of Dr. Berkowitz to undergo cervical disc replacement. "Before my surgery, my neck and shoulders felt like they were on fire," she recalls. "The pain gradually went down my arms and made my arms and hands numb."

"My hands were always cold, mostly my left," says Hughes. "Then I started getting headaches. I got to the point where I couldn't live with the pain anymore -- living on a hot water bottle or a cold pack and taking ibuprofen."

"What excites me the most about cervical disc replacement is that patients like Nancy who want to maintain motion in their neck have this new option," said Dr. Berkowitz. "This disc may revolutionize treatment options for surgical patients who normally would only have the option of a motion-restricting process of spinal fusion."

Dr. Berkowitz performed cervical disc replacement on Hughes, and today she is pain-free. "I feel wonderful," she

says. "My hand isn't numb or cold anymore. My upper back is not on fire, and I don't have the headaches."

And Hughes has a normal range of motion in her neck. "I have full mobility," she says. "I can turn my head up, down, sideways. It's just awesome!"

"I'm so glad we didn't have to go with a spinal fusion," she adds. "And my insurance covered my surgery."

#### How cervical disc replacement works

The new artificial Prestige<sup>®</sup> cervical disc is inserted into the neck using a technique similar to the one that surgeons use when performing a spinal fusion. A recent clinical trial comparing the clinical outcomes of cervical artificial disc replacement vs. spinal fusion surgery found that the Prestige disc showed superior neurological and overall success.

In the U.S. clinical trial of the Prestige cervical disc, patients who received the disc showed improved neurological success at 24 months and improved overall success. The clinical trial is the largest completed, prospective randomized controlled study of its kind on the cervical spine, enrolling a total of 541 patients.

For more information on neck disc replacement surgery, visit <http://www.center4orthopedics.com/procedures/neck-disc-replacement>. To schedule a consultation with Dr. Berkowitz, call Northeast Ohio's Center for Orthopedics at 440.329.2800.

Northeast Ohio's Center for Orthopedics, with offices in Sheffield Village, Oberlin and Westlake, Ohio, offers complete bone and joint care by five advance-trained, board-certified orthopedic surgeons. Call 440-329-2800 or visit [www.center4orthopedics.com](http://www.center4orthopedics.com) for more information.

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