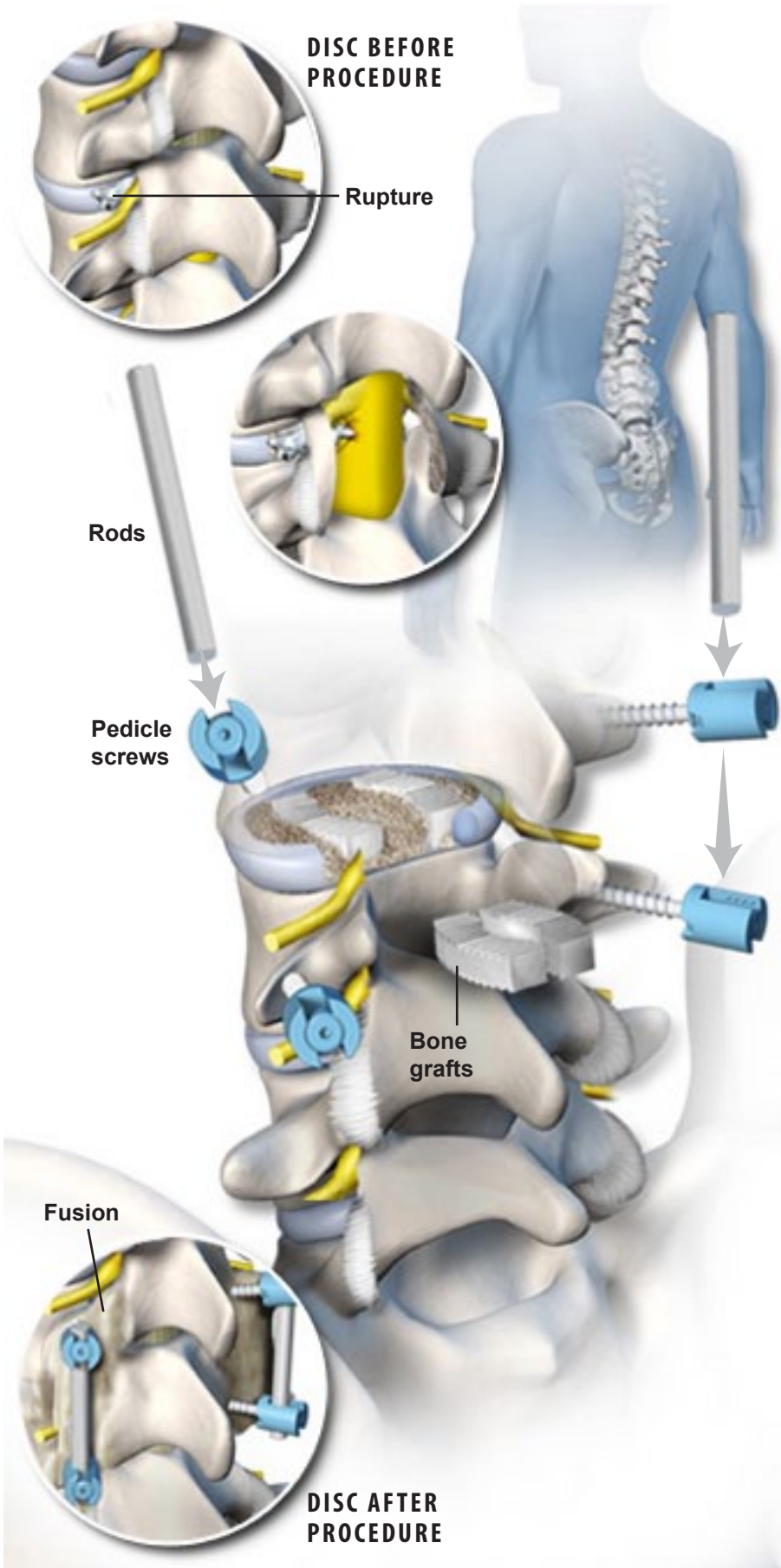


PLIF: POSTERIOR LUMBAR INTERBODY FUSION



Overview

PLIF is generally used to treat back or leg pain caused by degenerative disc disease. The surgeon will stabilize the spine by fusing vertebrae together with bone graft material.

Incision Made

The procedure is performed through a three to six inch incision in the back.

Disc Accessed

Parts of the vertebral bone need to be removed to get access to the disc.

Disc Partially Removed

The damaged disc is partially removed. Some of the disc wall is left behind to help contain the bone graft material.

Bone Grafts Placed

Bone grafts are placed in the empty disc space, realigning the vertebral bones. This also lifts pressure from pinched nerve roots. The area may also be filled with morselized bone.

Additional Supports Added

The surgeon may implant a series of screws and rods to the back of the spine for additional support. Bone graft is also placed along the sides of the spine.

End of Procedure

The morselized bone graft will grow through and around the implants, forming a bone bridge that connects the vertebral bodies above and below. This solid bone bridge is called a fusion.