

ALIF Procedure

ALIF stands for Anterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion. This procedure is similar to PLIF, however it is done from the front (anterior) of the body, usually through a 3-5 inch incision in the lower abdominal area or on the side. This incision may involve cutting through, and later repairing, the muscles in the lower abdomen.

At our practice, a mini open ALIF approach is available that preserves the muscles and allows access to the front of the spine through a very small incision. This approach maintains abdominal muscle strength and function and is oftentimes used to fuse the L5-S1 disc space.

Once the incision is made and the vertebrae are accessed, and after the abdominal muscles and blood vessels have been retracted, the disc material is removed. The surgeon then inserts bone graft (and anterior interbody cages, rods, or screws if necessary) to stabilize the spine and facilitate fusion.