

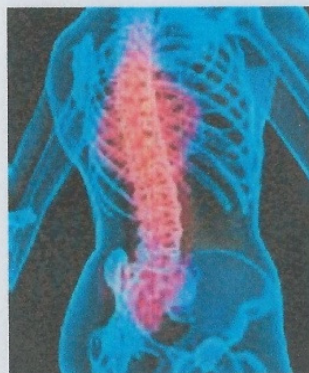
Get rid of your back pain in 30 minutes

Deepa Suryanarayan

Over the last two years, Lalbag resident Sangeeta Mehta, 39, had consulted over ten doctors to get rid of her severe lower back pain. Besides painkillers, she took refuge in physiotherapy and short wave diathermy (SWD), but to no avail.

"I could not stand or sit. The pain would ease only on lying down. I was afraid of even a cough or a sneeze," said Mehta.

A year ago, Mehta would not have had any choice but to undergo a major invasive back surgery for discogenic low back pain due to two disc bulges. But last month, she underwent a 30-minute procedure on an out-patient basis at Jaslok Hospital, and



Other advancements in back pain relief

- Fluoroscopy is now used to pinpoint the nerve blocks accurately so that the patient does not suffer from indiscriminate destruction of nerves
- Implants like spinal cord stimulators are now used for treating chronic backache, pain due to failed back surgery etc
- Procedures like discography pinpoints the intervertebral disc to be removed thereby avoiding failure of back surgery

"almost miraculously" and immediately went back to doing her chores.

"The minimally invasive procedure is called nucleoplasty and coblation technique," said Dr Preeti Doshi, chronic pain management consultant, Jaslok Hospital.

She said that it works well with patients like Mehta, who complain of back and leg pain due to small disc bulges.

"We first diagnosed the problem using MRI scan and discography, a procedure that involves injecting a dye

into the area of pain, to locate the source of pain," explained Dr Doshi.

"In nucleoplasty, we introduce a wand, similar to a needle, to the painful disc. Radio wave signals are sent through the transmitter (wand) into the jelly-like nu-

cleus of the herniated disc. The radio waves produce a low-temperature ionised gas that breaks up molecular bonds in the spongy nucleus, removing tissue volume," said Dr Doshi, explaining the 30-minute procedure.

"This kind of therapy is very beneficial, as it is a minimally invasive technique, is performed under local anaesthesia on a daycare basis," said Dr Doshi.

"Although it is very beneficial in the case of discogenic pain, nucleoplasty may not be the right treatment for all back pain — it is important to first locate the source of pain precisely," said anaesthetist Dr Prakash Avhad.

The process can be availed at a cost of Rs45,000.