

South Carolina Spine Center helps Judy return to work in the operating room

Judy leads a busy and active life with a career in nursing. Over the years, she has enjoyed running and playing softball for recreation. Unfortunately, Judy has also struggled with back and neck pain. She had a spine surgery in 2001 to relieve a herniated disc and was pleased to notice relief of symptoms for many years.

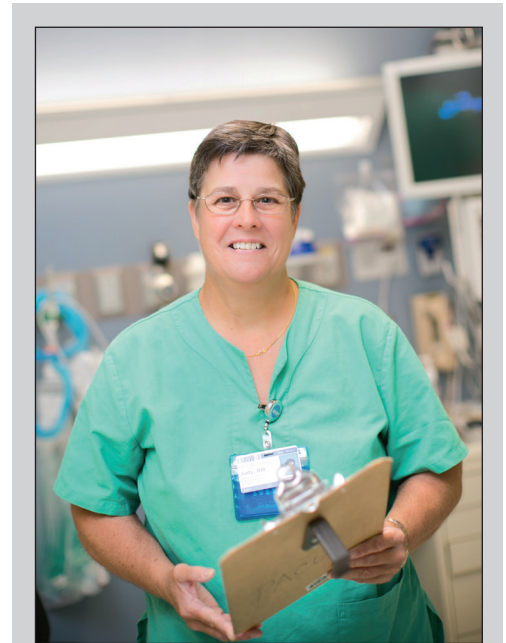
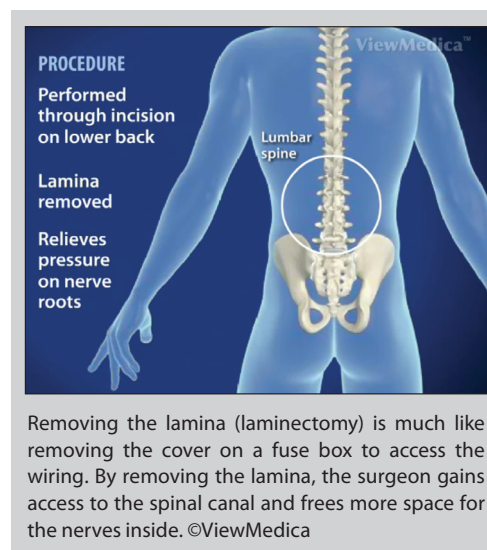
Judy's nursing career requires she remain active. In fact, it is not uncommon for her to log 13,000 steps per shift in the operating room. In 2011, Judy started noticing lower back pain and left leg pain. At first, she chalked the symptoms up to her active lifestyle.

But, when the symptoms persisted for several months and after trying conservative treatment options such as anti-inflammatories and special exercises prescribed by a physical therapist, Judy made an appointment with a fellowship-trained spine specialist at South Carolina Spine Center. The specialist reviewed Judy's medical history and ordered diagnostics of her lumbar spine. The results revealed Judy had spinal stenosis with radiculopathy in her lumbar spine.

Meanwhile, her symptoms were impacting her daily life and making it difficult to continue her work as a nurse. The spine specialist talked with Judy about a decompression surgery, called laminectomy, that would help relieve her symptoms. Eager to return to activity without pain, she decided to have the spine surgery.

A laminectomy is used in cases of spinal stenosis in which the entire canal is narrowed like a ring on a swollen finger, squeezing all of the nerve roots at that level of the spinal canal. Removing the lamina (laminectomy) is much like removing the cover on a fuse box to access the wiring. By removing the lamina, the surgeon gains access to the spinal canal and frees more space for the nerves inside.

The surgeon at South Carolina Spine Center performed the laminectomy and Judy noticed immediate relief from her back and leg pain. As part of her recovery, she worked with a physical therapist to learn specific exercises that would help



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strengthen her spine and make it more resistant to injury.

She was happy to return to light duty work in the OR after four weeks and her full time nursing duties after six weeks. "I'm happy to be back at work. Our department works well together as a team. We are willing to help each other out," Judy reflects. She also enjoys taking her dog for walks once again — without pain.

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