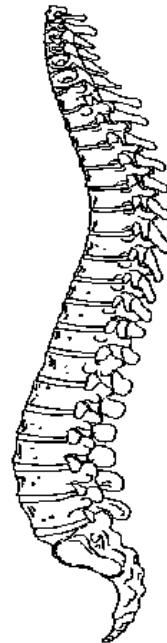


INFORMATION FOR DIVERS WITH BACK PROBLEMS (including spinal surgery)

1. What are the risks?

If you have had spinal surgery, or a slipped disc then you have a slightly higher risk of decompression illness affecting this part of the spine. Bubbles are more likely to affect tissue that is damaged or scarred after injury or surgery. This is probably because of changes in the blood supply to that part of the spine and there is some evidence that bubbles are more likely to form in these areas.

If you already have nerve damage (causing tingling, loss of sensation, or loss of power) then this should be carefully detailed by a doctor before you start diving. If you have problems after a dive, it is important to know what problems existed beforehand, and what might be related to diving. You should carry this information with you when diving.



2. Can I dive after spinal surgery?

Yes. You should ask your specialist about any special precautions required before starting to dive, and then once your fitness has recovered from the operation it would be advisable to start by using equipment in the pool. Make sure you are able to perform all the training exercises, including the rescue simulations. **You** are responsible for your buddy when you dive, and you should not be dependent on their assistance. If you do require additional help then you should dive with two experienced instructors who are able to assist you.

3. How can I reduce the chance of decompression illness?

Be aware that you have a higher risk than the average diver. The safest dives are shallow (less than 30 metres), short, and avoid the need for decompression. So- remain within the decompression limits, always perform safety stops at 5 metres at the end of a dive, and ascend slowly in a controlled manner. The risk is further reduced by using nitrox on air tables, and by using the low bubble risk tables (DCIEM tables- available from most dive shops or on the internet).

4. Where can I get more information?

Contact your GP in the first instance, or ScotSAC headquarters Tel 0131 625 4404
email: hq@scotsac.com
(Caledonia House, 1 Redheughs Rigg, South Gyle, Edinburgh EH12 9DQ.)