

## “I was a big fan of getting the pain over.”

*For 48-year-old Bryan Lee, the solution to the most excruciating pain of his life was a minimally invasive spine surgery that no other hospital in the state, and few other hospitals in the country, perform more often than Evergreen Hospital.*



Bryan Lee

Lee ended up in Evergreen’s Emergency Department when the bad back that had been bothering him for months suddenly had him on the floor in agony. An MRI found a large herniated, or ruptured, disc on the left side of his lower back pushing up against a nerve root. The pain was so intense, Lee couldn’t even stand up straight.

Dr. Jeffrey Roh, an orthopedic surgeon and spine specialist affiliated with Evergreen, determined that Lee’s best option was a micro-endoscopic discectomy, or MED. Dr. Roh explains that with traditional spinal surgery, there is a large incision along with significant blood loss and pain, and a long hospitalization. “But with an MED,” he says, “the incision is so small – just half an inch – that I cover it with a Band-Aid! Patients experience much less pain, and we’re able to send them home the same day or the next day. The recovery is much easier.”

### **SURGICAL INNOVATION**

Dr. Roh credits his Evergreen colleagues in other surgical specialties with paving the way for this evolution in spinal surgery. As they perfected their minimally invasive procedures and tiny surgical tools on gall bladders, appendixes and knees, spine surgeons took note. “Now,” Dr. Roh proudly points out, “Evergreen is at the forefront of spine surgery technology with these minimally invasive procedures. It’s pretty amazing.”

As the name implies, the micro-endoscopic discectomy uses an endoscope – essentially a small, hollow tube fitted with a tiny camera and a bright light – to guide Dr. Roh to the herniated disc. He then

inserts tiny surgical instruments into the endoscope’s hollow tube, allowing him to remove the material that is causing the problem.

“I perform 90 to 95 percent of my procedures this way now,” Dr. Roh says. “It’s a very large learning curve for the surgeon, but it’s so much better for the patient.” Dr. Roh is now instructing surgeons across the state – and around the world – in the minimally invasive spinal surgery techniques.

### **“ABSOLUTELY THE RIGHT CHOICE”**

Bryan Lee took it easy for about three months after the surgery, then began physical therapy to strengthen his core muscles. This will minimize the chances of the problem recurring. Lee is now back on the job as a partner at a window and door company. This means helping to load and unload all kinds of heavy materials...but Lee now pays more attention to how he lifts and bends.

“I enjoy my job and I’m glad I’m still able to do what I do every day – even lifting heavy windows and doors,” he says. “I made an informed decision about the surgery, and it was absolutely the right choice. I was a big fan of getting the pain over.”

*For more information or a referral to an Evergreen-affiliated orthopedic surgeon, call the Evergreen Healthline at 425.899.3000 or visit our Web site at [www.evergreenhealthcare.org](http://www.evergreenhealthcare.org).*



Jeffrey Roh, MD