

**GLOBE**

healthreport

CARRIE ANN BEATS CRIPPLING ARTHRITIS

GORGEOUS Carrie Ann Inaba was hiding a secret from Dancing with the Stars fans during the latest season of the hit ABC show.

"My back and neck were locked up," reveals the 41-year-old dancer, choreographer. "I wasn't able to move pretty much the whole time."

She was suffering from spinal stenosis, a painful arthritic condition whereby the spinal canal narrows and compresses the spinal cord and nerves.

It is usually caused by age-related degeneration, but sometimes by spinal disc herniation, osteoporosis or a tumor. About 400,000 Americans suffer from the condition.

Having struggled through her DWTS judging duties, Carrie Ann went under the knife after the show's run ended in November. And, amazingly, she was back dancing five days later!

"It's nice to have my motion back," says the Hawaiian-born beauty after surgery to relieve the pressure and stiffness in her neck. "I have dance class Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I'm back to my normal schedule and I can't wait!"

Dr. Bal Rajagopalan, a board certified Beverly Hills-based orthopedic surgeon known to his patients as "Dr. Raj" tells GLOBE: "Carrie Ann is very, very young to be going through surgery to repair this condition, but as a dancer she has had much more wear and tear on her joints and spinal column than the average person."

"Dancers are often over the hill way before their time when it comes to joint damage."

"The most common surgical procedure is called cervical laminoplasty in which a small 'door' is cut into the back of the spine to decompress the nerves and relieve her pain."

"Small artificial wedges are placed between the spine and the door to create more space."

The procedure takes about an hour under general anesthesia. Carrie Ann's recovery was incredibly quick. Typically following surgery, patients are put in a brace for two weeks and then must have

Surgery means beauty can dance again!

about two months of physical therapy.

"It should successfully relieve Carrie Ann's acute pain, but she will probably always have dull, chronic pain from over use injuries in her joints after all the years of dancing," Dr. Raj says.

While the 'Dancing' judge needed surgery, some sufferers can control their pain with medication or steroid injections along with physical therapy.

Carrie Ann hinted that she may have to face more surgery in the future, but experts say that with today's minimally invasive techniques she should be fine.

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Carrie Ann, inset, with DWTS judge Len Goodman, gives a victory sign

Update Constipation link to Parkinson's

+PEOPLE with a history of constipation are twice as likely to get Parkinson's disease as other folks, says a new report. A team from the Mayo Clinic discovered the link after studying medical records going back 38 years. Experts believe that constipation is an early sign of the neurodegenerative symptoms associated with Parkinson's, a brain disease that typically causes body tremors and slow movement, as well as impacting the digestive system.

Fishing for a healthy heart

+EATING more baked or boiled fish can slash your risk of cardiovascular disease by a quarter. University of Hawaii researchers found that while fish is good for you because it contains omega-3 fatty acids, the health benefits depend on how you cook it. Baked or boiled is better than fried, dried or salted, say scientists. Folks with the most omega-3 in their diet were 23 percent less likely to have heart problems.

How computers hurt your eyes

+STARING at a computer screen for long periods can cause chronic eye ailments, warn experts. Symptoms include watery eyes, blurred or double vision, headaches and sensitivity to light. Eyes have to work harder when reading a screen compared with something on paper, explains the Canadian Association of Optometrists. To stave off problems, use the 20-20-20 rule, taking a 20-second break every 20 minutes, focusing the eyes on something 20 feet away.