

Surgery Performed for Theken's New Spinal Fusion System

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Here's a "peak" at what's new in vertebral body replacement. Theken Spine is announcing that one of the first surgeries for its Vu Mesh system was performed recently by Dr. Robert Gewirtz at a leading hospital in Columbus, Ohio. In the news release, Dr. Gewirtz, one of the design surgeons, stated, "The surgery went very well." For a year, Dr. Gewirtz worked with Theken engineers and surgeons to develop this new product, known as the Vu Mesh™ PEEK-OPTIMA® Vertebral Body Replacement System.

Intended for use in the mid and low back to replace a collapsed, damaged, or unstable vertebra due to trauma or tumor, the Vu Mesh acts as a spacer if the disc and vertebra are removed, thus maintaining the proper space between vertebrae.

The product, designed to enable customization for different patient anatomies, is made of PEEK-OPTIMA material, which is radiolucent with tantalum markers, allowing the surgeon to determine proper placement of the device and track the progress of bone fusion.

Theken received FDA clearance to market Vu Mesh in the United States in late April. With this surgery, the product moves into the alpha phase, with a targeted launch of midsummer 2007. This is the first product out of six which Theken anticipates receiving FDA clearance this year.