



Spine Surgery

Is it for you?



The surgeons and staff at **South Denver Neurosurgery** are focused on getting you back to you again. While we believe in taking a conservative approach to treatment, when spine surgery is necessary, our fellowship-trained neurosurgeons utilize the most advanced technology supported by medical research. Our approach to treatment ensures that you fully understand your options, the medical research supporting each option along with the pros and cons of each choice.



Our main Denver location is:
Littleton Adventist Hospital Campus
Arapahoe Medical Plaza III
7780 S. Broadway, Suite 350
Littleton, CO 80122
sdnspine.org
720-638-7500

Learn more at **sdnspine.org** or call us at **720-638-7500** to schedule an appointment.

Learn about spine surgery and what you should consider before moving forward.



Getting You Back Faster

Spine pain is a complicated problem that can be caused by many different problems in the back, neck, and/or nerves. Overall, 80 percent of people will find relief with nonsurgical treatments. However, that doesn't equate to each individual having an 80 percent chance of recovering without spine surgery. In fact, certain conditions, including **disc herniation**, **spinal stenosis** (narrowing of the spinal column), and **degenerative spondylolisthesis**, respond better to surgery than nonsurgical treatments*. Spine problems caused by trauma or genetic diseases also typically require surgery.

South Denver Neurosurgery specializes in the most advanced spine surgical procedures, including minimally invasive and robotic guided procedures, making surgery safer and more effective than ever before. In some cases, hospital stays are minimized to one night, and patients can resume activity within weeks.

Are you a candidate for spine surgery?

If you answer "yes" to these questions, spine surgery might be right for you.

- ▶ *Have you tried physical therapy?*
- ▶ *Have you tried medical therapies?*
- ▶ *Have you tried steroid injections?*
- ▶ *Is your quality of life or activity level greatly diminished by your pain?*

Before spine surgery

Before considering surgery, South Denver Neurosurgery advocates the following steps:

- ▶ Obtain a thorough health history, physical exam, and appropriate imaging tests (X-ray, CT, or MRI) from your primary care physician
- ▶ If possible, pursue conservative treatment, which includes:
 - Physical therapy, acupuncture, and massage
 - Medications such as NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen), muscle relaxers and, in some cases, carefully controlled use of narcotic pain medications
 - Steroid injections tailored to the origination point of the pain
 - Patient weight loss, smoking cessation, and control of diabetes and hypertension

If you have tried these options and your pain has not diminished or is negatively affecting your quality of life (preventing you from sleeping or exercising), spine surgery might be right for you.

*Spine Patient Outcomes Research Trial research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Nov 2006) and *The New England Journal of Medicine* (May 2007 and Feb 2008).

Eight out of 10 Americans will suffer from back or neck pain at some point in their lives.

Selecting a spine surgeon

If you are ready to consider spine surgery, you should carefully consider who will perform your surgery. Numerous studies have shown that the surgeon's training and experience make a significant difference in patient outcomes.

Both orthopedic surgeons and neurosurgeons can be trained in spine surgery. However, neurosurgeons, like those at South Denver Neurosurgery, have specific training to ensure consideration is given to the central and peripheral nerves during surgery, maximizing success and minimizing pain. Our surgeons have performed thousands of spine surgeries, maintaining complication and infection rates that are equal to or better than national averages.

When selecting a surgeon, ask these questions:

1. What formal training in spine surgery have you completed?
2. How many spine surgeries have you performed? How many times have you performed this particular surgery?
3. What are your outcomes for this surgery?
4. What is your infection rate?
5. What are the risks and benefits of this surgery?

If you have questions, including whether now is the right time for surgery, please call us at 720-638-7500.



Spine Surgery *Options*

South Denver Neurosurgery offers minimally invasive and traditional (open) spine surgeries, including procedures to preserve motion of the back and neck. We use the most advanced technology, including robotic guidance systems for more precise surgery.

Some of the conditions we treat include:

- ▶ **Degenerative disc disease (DDD)** — A common source of lower back pain, DDD evolves gradually as the discs lose flexibility, elasticity, and shock-absorbing characteristics.
- ▶ **Sacroiliac (SI) joint dysfunction** — SI joints are where the pelvis and lower spine connect. When the SI joint becomes inflamed or the cartilage wears down, SI joint dysfunction occurs and is the cause of up to 30 percent of all lower back pain.
- ▶ **Herniated disc** — Occurs when a portion or all of a disc moves out of place (slips).
- ▶ **Cervical radiculopathy** — A pinched nerve.
- ▶ **Spinal stenosis** — Narrowing of the spinal column resulting in pressure on the spinal cord.
- ▶ **Spondylolisthesis** — A condition where a bone in the lower part of the spine slips out of the proper position onto the bone below it.
- ▶ **Myelopathy** — A condition resulting from inflammation, disease, or trauma to the spinal cord.
- ▶ **Synovial cyst** — A fluid-filled sac in the spine that has developed as a result of degenerative disc disease.
- ▶ **Facet arthropathy** — Arthritis that develops in the spine's facet joints.

We also specialize in the treatment of scoliosis; bone fractures; spinal issues caused by infections or tumors; arthritis; spondylosis (spinal osteoarthritis); and structural issues of the spine.

Common spine surgery procedures we offer include:

- ▶ Cervical and lumbar discectomy
- ▶ Fusions
- ▶ Facet and posterior fusions
- ▶ Lumbar spine decompressions
- ▶ Laminectomy
- ▶ Kyphoplasty
- ▶ Vertebroplasty
- ▶ Total discectomies
- ▶ Disc replacement

Each surgical procedure is determined on an individual case-by-case basis. We work with you to help you understand your options and the pros and cons of each before you make a decision.

Download a free patient guide at sdnspine.org with tips on what to consider when choosing spine surgery, how to choose a surgeon and more.



South Denver Neurosurgeons

If you are a candidate for spine surgery, you can be assured that the South Denver Neurosurgery's highly educated and experienced neurosurgeons have your back. All of our surgeons are board certified.



Bernard Guiot, MD

Dr. Guiot is one of the most highly trained spine surgeons in the Rocky Mountain region, having completed three specialty spine fellowships — one in pediatric spinal deformity and two in adult reconstructive surgery — and performed thousands of spine surgeries over the past 20 years. Dr. Guiot specializes in all aspects of spine care, including nonoperative and operative management of spinal problems and complex spinal reconstruction, utilizing minimally invasive and robotic guided surgical techniques. He also specializes in treating sacroiliac joint pain, which is the underlying cause of one-third of back pain cases. Dr. Guiot is board certified by the American Board of Neurological Surgeons and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.



J. Adair Prall, MD

Board certified by the American Board of Neurological Surgery, Dr. Prall is a leader in his field with more than 20 years of neurosurgical experience. He is experienced in all types of cranial and spinal surgery and specializes in minimally invasive and motion-preserving spine surgery. Dr. Prall also has extensive experience with both benign and malignant spinal tumors and works closely with medical oncologists to use chemotherapy and immunotherapy for treatment.



David P. VanSickle, MD, PhD

Dr. VanSickle is board certified by the American Board of Neurological Surgery and specializes in minimally invasive and motion-preserving spine surgery, spinal disorders, spinal cord stimulator implantation for pain, as well as deep brain stimulation surgery, functional neurosurgery, neuro-oncology, and epilepsy surgery.



South Denver Neurosurgery's Dr. Ben Guiot was the first neurosurgeon to perform an open spine surgery at Littleton Adventist Hospital using the Mazor Robotics Renaissance™ Guidance System.