



SCOLIOSIS
AND
SPINE CENTER

Who's Watching Your Back?

Experts at St. Joseph are national leaders in complex spine care

The brain may be the body's great communicator, but without the spinal cord and the spine that protects it, we would all be a mere mass of immobile flesh and bones. That's why protecting the spine is crucial to your overall health, and why you don't want to trust it to just anyone.

Pictured above: St. Joseph spine surgeons (left to right) Drs. Paul McAfee, John Seftor, Justin Tortolani and Ira Fedder, and (center) orthopaedic nurse practitioner Kathy Mulford.

Motion-Preserving Disc Replacement

Among the most recent advances in complex spine surgery has been the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval of the Charite™ Artificial Disc Replacement, a motion-preserving device that treats severe back pain in the lumbar (lower) region.

Drs. McAfee and Fedder were co-investigators during the Charite™ clinical trials and, together with Tortolani, have already performed nearly 200 of the disc replacement procedures.

"This device is revolutionizing spine surgery," says McAfee. The Charite™ procedure offers an alternative to traditional spinal fusion surgery. Though artificial replacements are commonly used in hips and knees, this is the first FDA approval of such a device for spinal discs.

Spine surgeons at St. Joseph are now performing an FDA clinical trial for a sim-

ilar device for cervical (neck) disc replacement, one that was created by McAfee. The Porous-Coated Motion (PCM) Artificial Cervical Disc, like the Charite™, is a motion-preserving device that offers pain relief by replacing a damaged disc with an artificial one that allows joint movement.

For more information about the Charite™ or PCM Artificial Disc study, please call the St. Joseph Medical Center Doctors Directory at 410.337.1337.



Ironically, the very thing that gives us movement is often what encumbers us.

More than 80 percent of Americans endure some type of back or neck pain in their lifetimes – from the simply annoying to the severely incapacitating. That makes it likely that you either know someone who's dealt with it, you've experienced or are experiencing it yourself, or you're likely to at some time in the future.

By far, the best tactic for avoiding problems with the spine is prevention, which ranges from diet and nutrition to exercise and knowing how to move, sit and stand properly.

"Most people simply don't pay enough attention to their backs," says St. Joseph Medical Center chief of Spine Surgery Dr. Paul McAfee. "And, what happens is you get injured or,

more likely, years of doing the same wrong things over and over lead to degenerative disc disease."

Other back and neck problems are age-related or congenital and include conditions like scoliosis, kyphosis and fractures related to osteoporosis. Tumors can also develop along the spine, a serious condition that often requires surgery.

Fellowship-trained and internationally recognized spine experts at St. Joseph's Scoliosis and Spine Center treat more than 10,000 patients annually across the U.S. and around the globe with these and other spinal disorders, making it the area's largest and most experienced spine center.

From diagnosis to pain management and surgery, St. Joseph is a hub for

some of the most complex spine cases and subsequent treatments, and is leading the future of spine care through the participation in important clinical trials. But, while staying on the cusp of advancing technologies, the center's focus remains on its patients.

"Our approach is multidisciplinary, with an emphasis on educating and guiding patients and their families through all aspects of treatment, whether surgical or non-surgical," says Dr. Ira Fedder, medical director of the Scoliosis and Spine Center.

And, while the surgeons are the "craftspeople" of the complexities related to spine disorders, often it's the other clinical staff who are on the front lines of patient care. The center employs a full-time certified nurse practitioner, who focuses on the non-

surgical care of spine problems. When surgery is needed, St. Joseph has created its unique Clinical Case Management system. Registered nurses prepare patients and their families for surgery by describing and counseling along each step of the surgical experience, from preoperative evaluation through recovery and rehabilitation.

“This system is unique in that we spend a lot of time with our patients,” says St. Joseph spine sur-

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geon Dr. Justin Tortolani. “They are more confident because they are being informed throughout the process; they are better educated,” says Tortolani. “Ultimately, this improves outcomes and gets people back to their normal routines faster.”



Need a Spine Expert?
Call our Doctors Directory at **410.337.1337** or visit **sjmcmd.org**



St. Joseph chief of Spine Surgery Dr. Paul McAfee was recently recognized by *The Daily Record* (TDR) as a “health care hero.” McAfee was the top winner in TDR’s 2005 Health Care Heroes ranking in the category of Advancements in Health Care.

The award recognized McAfee’s leadership role in the five-year clinical trial for the Charite™ Artificial Disc Replacement,

and its subsequent Food and Drug Administration approval. He also was recognized for performing the first-ever two-level artificial disc replacement in the U.S., as well as for the development of the motion-preserving cervical disc replacement, which is in clinical trials in the U.S. and currently being used in 37 countries to treat patients with severe neck pain.

Spine Facts

The spine is composed of roughly four areas that include from top to bottom the cervical spine, thoracic spine, lumbar spine and the sacrum.

Most problems affecting the spine occur in the cervical area, which includes the top seven vertebrae in your neck, and the lumbar area, which is your lower back.

“The lumbar area is the most prone to injury because it bears so much weight whenever we sit, stand, push, pull or lift,” explains St. Joseph spine surgeon Dr. John Seftor. And, because the thoracic vertebrae don’t rotate as much as the neck and lower back, they are much more stable and generally less susceptible to injury.

Many times, back and neck pain can be easily resolved with rest, anti-inflammatory medicine and specialized exercises, but in the following cases, you’ll need to see a spine expert, sometimes very quickly:

TRAUMA: If you fall, are in a car accident or have done anything abrupt that may have resulted in a fracture, you should see a spine specialist within 24 hours.

RADICULAR PAIN: Any back or neck pain that radiates into your leg or arm, especially if it is getting worse, is a danger signal. You should be evaluated by a spine specialist within 2 to 3 days.

PERSISTENT PAIN: If pain in the low back or neck area doesn’t respond to rest and anti-inflammatories within 3 days, you should probably be seen by a spine specialist.

LOSS OF BLADDER OR BOWEL CONTROL: This is an emergency signal, and you should go to an emergency department immediately.

FOOT DROP: A toe dragging as you walk also is a danger signal for serious neurological problems. This symptom requires evaluation by a spine specialist within 24 hours.

WEAKNESS, NUMBNESS OR PAIN: Any of these symptoms that extend below a knee or elbow may be serious and should be evaluated within 2 days.