

FIRST-CLASS Spine Care

Orthopedic Urgent Care
OrthoCarolina
Spine Center
2001

A LEADER IN REGIONAL SPINE CARE, THE ORTHOCAROLINA SPINE CENTER IN CHARLOTTE, NC, IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING PATIENTS WITH APPROPRIATE TREATMENT OPTIONS THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE AND RESEARCH.

THE ORTHOCAROLINA SPINE Center is a multidisciplinary spine program consisting of nine spine surgeons and six physiatrists. Providing comprehensive, quality care for patients suffering from extremity numbness and weakness or back and neck pain, the uniqueness of the OrthoCarolina Spine Center lies in the center's dedication to providing patients with a comprehensive evaluation by using evidence-based medicine.

Stressing Conservative Care

While many centers stress providing the most advanced procedures, the OrthoCarolina Spine Center team is committed to educating patients and providing good information so they can make the most informed decisions regarding their own health care needs.

"I am a big advocate of education and have seen many patients who have either failed interventional treatments or have not responded well to surgery because those were not the most appropriate steps to take when trying to resolve their back pain," says Craig Brigham, M.D., spine surgeon at the OrthoCarolina Spine Center. "While surgery is indicated for certain diagnoses, the evidence shows that surgery is not helpful in resolving general back pain. What patients truly need is good information regarding their test results, diagnosis and available options. At OrthoCarolina, we spend ample

time with our patients performing a comprehensive evaluation that will provide for the most accurate diagnosis. We also take time to explain to patients what their MRI means and what options might be helpful.”

For patients determined to benefit from conservative measures, physical therapy, including aquatic therapy with an underwater treadmill, is available through the OrthoCarolina Spine Center, as well as a full range of interventional services, such as nerve root blocks and facet root blocks. The OrthoCarolina Spine Center’s team of fellowship-trained physiatrists also provides electromyography.

State-of-the-Art Surgical Services

Depending on the patient’s specific needs, a wide variety of surgical modalities — ranging from microdiscectomies to surgical correction of severe spinal deformities, such as scoliosis — is available.

“Based on each patient’s specific problems, a comprehensive array of options are available and include simple operations, such as minimally invasive microdiscectomies, and more complex surgeries, including motion preservation surgery, lumbar and cervical disc replacement and complex scoliosis correction,” says Alden Milam, M.D., spine surgeon at the OrthoCarolina Spine Center. “We also perform cervical laminoplasty — a procedure developed in Japan — that is performed on the posterior aspect of the neck. This allows for decompression of the spinal cord and nerve roots while still allowing patients to maintain normal neck motion, which is not possible during a traditional fusion procedure.”

Cutting-Edge Research

Aside from providing clinical care, the OrthoCarolina Spine Center team is also heavily involved in research, including several FDA-sponsored trials for cervical disc replacement, an ongoing clinical study on laminoplasty and several clinical trials regarding use of the EXOGEN 4000 Bone Healing System. OrthoCarolina Spine Center spine surgeons Bruce Darden II, M.D., and Daniel Murrey, M.D., have also done extensive work on the ProDisc artificial disc.

“The OrthoCarolina Spine Center research team investigating ProDisc was part of the FDA investigational device exemption study and participated in ProDisc biomechanical research,” says Dr. Darden. “Our research has been published in several nationwide papers, with Dr. Murrey being the lead author on several publications.”

Dr. Brigham is involved in developing an algorithmic approach to handling back conditions through conservative care and evidence-based medicine and is also a leading surgical consultant for the National Football League, serving as a consulting physician on severe neck problems.

“I was an athlete myself and have become involved in the care of neck injuries,” says Dr. Brigham. “Controversy still remains

“The OrthoCarolina Spine Center is the only group in the region where every physician in the practice is board certified, with our physiatrists having achieved double board certification. We are involved in cutting-edge research, including FDA-sponsored clinical trials, and provide comprehensive care for all patients using the latest techniques and technologies available.”

— Alden Milam, M.D., spine surgeon at the OrthoCarolina Spine Center

regarding how these types of injuries should be treated. In this area, I stress performing a comprehensive evaluation to develop an individual diagnosis that is as specific as possible, so that we can develop the most appropriate treatment plan.”

Educating Other Physicians

Since 1992, the OrthoCarolina Spine Center has had a spine surgery fellowship program in place. Resident education has been provided, as well as education for international spine physicians.

“Providing resident and fellowship education has been an integral part of the OrthoCarolina Spine Center since its inception,” says Dr. Darden. “Our physicians have also been committed to teaching international physicians and have performed outreach work in Haiti and Ethiopia.”

The OrthoCarolina Spine Center team has also remained committed to continuing education. A sabbatical program is in place where physicians can apply to spend a month to six weeks with physicians around the world. All spine physicians have received both national and international training, learning new techniques they might otherwise not have had direct access.

For more information about the OrthoCarolina Spine Center, please visit www.orthocarolina.com or call (704) 323-2225. ■