

# SOUTH CAROLINA SPINE CENTER

Advanced spine care services of

# SELF REGIONAL

HEALTHCARE

## Greenwood Main Office:

115 Academy Avenue, Unit A  
Greenwood, SC 29646

Referrals: 888-526-8806 Fax: 864-725-5799  
SCSpineCenter.org

## Improving spine care through a team approach that combines non-surgical MDs, spine surgeons and therapists — all under 1 roof

The latest medical advances have made it easier for physicians to detect abnormalities in the spine. While this is helpful, some disc abnormalities are simply a common by-product of aging. For instance, some studies have shown that nearly half of healthy people over the age of 40 — with no back pain whatsoever — can have MRIs that would suggest disc problems.

Most patients don't understand that surgery is not appropriate for back or neck pain that relates to spasm or soft tissue injury. Specialists in non-surgical spine care can resolve these problems with spine therapy or spinal injections that bridge people



Mathew Gowans, MD and Karl Boellert, MD specialize in non-surgical spine care at South Carolina Spine Center.

back to activity.

South Carolina Spine Center protocols emphasize six weeks of nonsurgical care (absent red flag symptoms like loss of bowel/bladder control or weakness in an arm or leg) before progressing to surgical options.

The spine center has two physical medicine physicians, Dr. Karl Boellert and Dr. Mathew Gowans, who work with a team of internal spine therapists. If non-surgical options fail to provide relief the patient will consult with one of three fellowship-trained neurosurgeons who specialize in minimally invasive spine surgery and cervical artificial disc.

Dr. Boellert, for example, is able to provide pain relieving injections that can reduce inflammation around a nerve root. This can bridge the patient to physical therapy and a return to activity. Spinal injections can also provide important diagnostic information to the spine physician.

By having physical medicine doctors, spine neurosurgeons, spine therapists, an exercise gym,



The spine surgery team includes Dr. Sumeer Lal, Dr. Michael Kilburn and Dr. Gregory McLoughlin, fellowship-trained spine neurosurgeons.

MRI and an injection suite all on the campus of Self Regional Healthcare, the back or neck pain patient no longer has to drive around town. Best of all, communication is improved between the spine care team, which speeds the patient's return to activity.

## Minimally invasive spine surgery, new fusion technology & cervical artificial disc replacement

In early 2016, Dr. Greg McLoughlin was the first spine surgeon in the State of South Carolina to use the latest instrumentation to restore proper spinal curvature after fusion surgery. The new VariLift technology enables the surgeon to remove the damaged disc and restore the proper lordosis which lessens the risk of further disc degeneration at disc levels above and below the fusion site. The minimally invasive surgery is performed through a tiny incision with a tubular retractor which involves less blood loss, less time in the hospital and a faster

recovery. Where possible, the spine surgeons at South Carolina Spine Center use minimally invasive spine surgery that shortens the incision and enables patients to be home the same day.

Those patients needing neck surgery can also benefit from new technology in artificial disc replacement. The patient would have to meet criteria to qualify for cervical disc replacement. More information can be obtained by e-mailing Wayne Mounts at wayne.mounts@selfmedicalgroup.org.

## COOLIEF\* injections: A new non-surgical treatment option

Dr. Karl Boellert provides lumbar and cervical epidural steroid injections as a non-surgical option for herniated discs. In 2015, Dr. Boellert also began using COOLIEF\*, the latest technology that uses cooled radiofrequency energy to safely target the sensory nerves causing pain. The COOLIEF\* system circulates water through the device to create a larger treatment area.

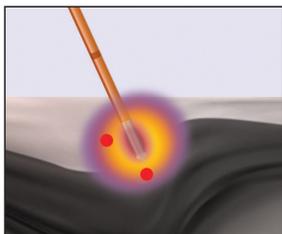


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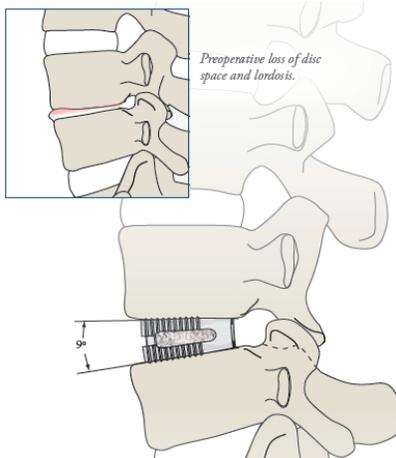
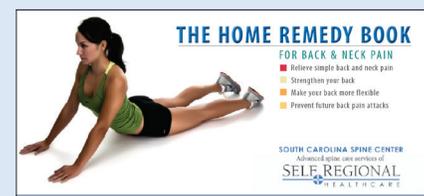


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## Home Remedy Book for your patients



South Carolina Spine Center provides a free 36-page Home Remedy Book for patients and primary care physicians to distribute to their patients. Patients can request a copy at [SCSpineCenter.org](http://SCSpineCenter.org) — an online spine encyclopedia with symptom charts and pain-relieving stretches.

# 4 Benefits of a Second Opinion from South Carolina Spine Center

For those back and neck pain sufferers who have exhausted nonsurgical treatment options, spine surgery may be the next step in resolving pain or serious symptoms like numbness or weakness in a hand or foot.

Because spine surgery is a serious decision, it is a good idea to obtain a second opinion. A second opinion from a spine center



can provide patients the following benefits:

1. Determine if all possible treatment options have been considered and if there are any other nonsurgical options, such as injection or physical therapy, that can relieve symptoms without the need for surgery.

2. If spine surgery is necessary,



what type of spine surgery should be performed. One surgeon may recommend a complex, multiple level fusion while a more proficient surgeon may recommend a less invasive surgery. South Carolina Spine Center also is able to provide artificial disc replacement for certain neck problems.

3. Provide a review of a patient's detailed history and recent MRI. Those patients who have emergent symptoms can see a spine surgeon within 24-48 hours.

4. Determine if the patient is a candidate for minimally invasive spine surgery which can involve a tiny incision that gets the patient home the same day for a faster, less painful recovery.

South Carolina Spine Center is the only spine center in the state of South Carolina to be included in Spine Center Network, an exclusive national listing of credentialed spine centers of excellence, and the only program to publish a Clinical Outcome Report Card for insurance companies.



Other validation of quality was provided by BlueBlue BlueShield of South Carolina which designated South Carolina Spine Center as a Blue Distinction® Center.

Designated as a

**Blue Distinction Center®**

for Spine Surgery



South Carolina

Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina  
is an Equal Opportunity Employer  
Minority and Female Health Incentives

## Teacher of the year back in the classroom after spine surgery

Glenda is a successful first grade school teacher with 33 years of tenure. She enjoys staying active by working out in the gym with her personal trainer, walking and playing with her two granddaughters.

When Glenda first began experiencing mild pain in her back, leg and hip, she chalked it up to years of physical activity. But when her symptoms worsened, Glenda went to her family physician to find out what was causing her pain. Her doctor ordered an MRI of her spine which revealed spinal stenosis at L3-4. Meanwhile, Glenda was starting to experience more severe pain symptoms along with numbness and tingling in her right leg.

Spinal stenosis is characterized by a narrowing of the spinal canal, which places pressure on the spinal cord and nerves.

Her family physician referred her to South Carolina Spine Center where the spine specialist performed a steroid injection which offered her several months of symptom relief. Her personal trainer also formulated an exercise program designed for her condition.

Unfortunately, over time, her symptoms resurfaced. Glenda went in for another steroid injection. This time Glenda's pain and numbness came back after only two weeks. By now, her pain, numbness and tingling symptoms were greatly interfering with her quality of life. Because of her symptoms, even the most basic activities such as standing, walking and sleeping were difficult. This was impacting her in the classroom. In order to continue to work, Glenda would sit as she taught her first grade class.

Because Glenda had tried nonsurgical spine treatment without lasting symptom relief, it was time to explore her spine surgery options with a



fellowship-trained spine neurosurgeon at South Carolina Spine Center.

"I have always lived an active lifestyle and I didn't want the pain and numbness symptoms to become a permanent way of life for me," Glenda reflects. The spine surgeon talked extensively with Glenda about the spine surgery needed to treat her spinal stenosis. Glenda was eager to get back to activity and decided to move forward with the surgery. She chose South Carolina Spine Center because of its reputation of excellence in spine surgery.

Glenda's surgery was a success. "I felt immediate relief from my symptoms following

*"South Carolina Spine Center helped me get my life back. They were just wonderful," Glenda reflects.*

surgery," she says. Glenda was relieved to be able to walk without pain and she returned to working out with her personal trainer as soon as she could. The physical therapists at the Spine Center worked with Glenda's trainer in coming up with specific exercises designed to help straighten and strengthen her spine. At the end of the school year, she was overjoyed to be selected as the Ninety Six Primary School "Teacher of the Year."

### SOUTH CAROLINA SPINE CENTER

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**Karl Boellert, MD**, Board-Certified Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Fellowship-Trained in Spine  
**Mathew Gowans, MD**, Board-Certified Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation  
**Michael Kilburn, MD; Sumeer Lal, MD; and Gregory McLoughlin, MD**  
Board-Certified & Fellowship-Trained Spine Neurosurgeons

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