



 NATIONAL  
**SPINE HEALTH**  
FOUNDATION  
[spinehealth.org](http://spinehealth.org)

**CASE FOR SUPPORT**

# A HEALTHY SPINE KEEPS YOU MOVING SO YOU CAN LIVE LIFE ON YOUR OWN TERMS.

When you support the National Spine Health Foundation, you empower patients to protect their spine health and take back their lives from debilitating spinal conditions.

**Your spine supports everything you do – from work and play to treasured time spent with those you love.** A healthy spine is strong and flexible, moving with you through everyday activities and helping you keep up with the people and experiences that matter most to you.

Every aspect of your health, from maintaining a healthy heart and lungs to mental health, is connected to and supported by a healthy spine.

**When a serious spinal condition strikes, it feels like life as you know it has suddenly come to an end.** Severe back and neck pain devastates patients and can have a cascading impact on their entire families. Conditions such as spinal arthritis, herniated or degenerative discs, and nerve compression can cause excruciating pain, leading to lost mobility, ability to work, and income, as well as significant trauma, isolation, clinical depression, and decreased quality of life.

**Spinal conditions are a nationwide crisis affecting millions of people.** Chances are good that you or someone you love has needed treatment for a spinal condition.

**Spinal conditions affect more than 100 million Americans** (approximately 1 in 3 people) and have a staggering nationwide impact, causing:<sup>1</sup>

- 264 million lost workdays every year – the #1 job-related disability in the United States
- A \$250 billion annual economic impact in lost wages and productivity
- More new opioid prescriptions than any non-cancer health condition
- Compounding, secondary health conditions from cardiovascular problems to clinical depression

**It doesn't have to be this way.** Spine health is a rapidly evolving field, and today's scientific advances make it possible to envision a future without debilitating spinal conditions. New spinal treatments and interventions are emerging that offer patients hope to regain their lives. Patients now have more choices than ever before that enable them to get back to living active, healthy, pain-free lives.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the impact of spinal conditions in the United States, please see a list of relevant publications on page 9.





## The National Spine Health Foundation is the only patient-centered organization dedicated to helping patients overcome debilitating spinal conditions and take back their lives.

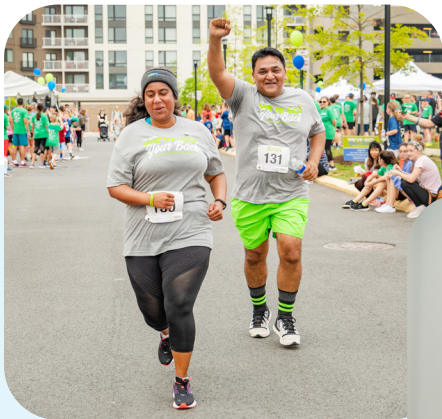
Through patient education, award-winning research, and advocacy, we give patients the tools they need to make informed decisions about their spine health and navigate their own treatment journeys with confidence. We believe patients deserve real solutions, real answers, and real hope.

We have convened an outstanding Medical and Scientific Board comprising the nation's top spine surgeons, all recognized leaders in the field.

Our inspiring Spinal Champions™ – individuals who have overcome serious spinal conditions – lead by example and show other patients that there is hope.

Philanthropic support is crucial to our mission – and your gift helps transform patients' lives. As a patient-centered nonprofit organization, the work we do is fully powered by people of passion and purpose who share our belief that everyone deserves excellent spine health. We've built a powerful network of supporters and ambassadors nationwide, including spine health experts, industry leaders, and committed individual supporters.

Every gift puts healing and hope in the hands of patients who need them most. We are stronger together – especially with you.



# PATIENT EDUCATION

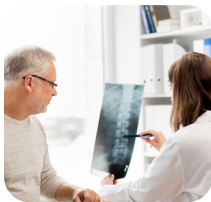
We empower patients with the knowledge and hope to take charge of their spine health.

**Patients with spinal conditions have more choices than ever before.** Multi-disciplinary approaches to treating musculoskeletal disorders are rapidly expanding, including physical therapy, regenerative medicine, and new, minimally invasive surgical options.

As healthcare moves toward a shared decision-making model and patients increasingly seek out health information online – especially digital natives such as Millennials and Generation Z – a trusted, reliable source of information is more important than ever.

**Studies show that when patients are educated about their spinal treatment, they heal faster and experience better outcomes.** The National Spine Health Foundation creates and publishes educational resources to help patients navigate their options, make informed decisions, and get back to their lives as quickly as possible.

Philanthropic support fuels our patient education resources and programs, enabling us to put answers in the hands of patients who need them most.



## THE PATIENT JOURNEY

Resources and Expert Guidance to Meet Patients Where They Are

Each patient's spine health experience is unique, and everyone deserves honest answers and unbiased support to navigate the treatment choices that are right for them. That's why we've created the Patient Journey, a set of resources to guide patients in spine health awareness and prevention as well as diagnosis, treatment, and recovery for conditions ranging from common to severe. Our resources include:

### Awareness and Injury Prevention

- Posture, workplace ergonomics, and safe lifting practices
- Exercise, nutrition, sleep, and physical therapy

### Diagnosis and Treatment

- Choosing a spine health specialist and understanding diagnosing testing and imaging
- Understanding your condition and the range of treatment options that could be right for you

### Recovery and Maintaining Excellent Spine Health

- Guidance for patients after surgery or treatment
- Support for caregivers, families, and loved ones



## **SPINE-TALKS™**

### Unparalleled Access to World-Class Experts

The National Spine Health Foundation has created Spine-Talks to bring world-class spine health expertise to you, wherever you are. Featuring the nation's top spine surgeons, physicians, and healthcare professionals, Spine-Talks answer real patient questions, share information about exciting new advances in spinal treatment, and provide actionable advice to help you make more informed choices about your spine health.



## **SPINAL CHAMPIONS™ AND THE “GET BACK TO IT”® PODCAST**

### Building a Community of Support, Inspiration, and Hope

Patients facing a debilitating back or neck condition can often feel lost, alone, and overwhelmed – but the road to recovery doesn't have to be a lonely one. Our Spinal Champions program brings together individuals who have achieved improved quality of life through treatment for their neck or back pain to share their own stories of hope and provide encouragement to other patients. Spinal Champions help others find strength, comfort, and peer-to-peer support in a community that understands.

Our “Get Back to It” Podcast showcases these inspiring individuals and the steps they took to heal. Do you have a Spinal Champion story of your own to share? We encourage you to be part of our growing community and support others by sharing your experience.



# RESEARCH

We advance research that gives patients real answers for their spine health.

**The National Spine Health Foundation conducts independent research that patients can trust.** Our award winning research is nationally and internationally recognized. We critically evaluate treatment options from a patient perspective, independent of outside interests.

We work continuously to gather quality national data on spine health, publish our findings in nationally recognized peer reviewed journals, and present at national and international conferences.

Our research is already sought-after by patients and their physicians to inform treatment plans for serious spinal conditions – as well as by medical researchers seeking to develop innovative new therapies.

Philanthropic support helps us build on this success, maintain our independent voice, and expand our reach to more patients.



## CURRENT SPINE HEALTH RESEARCH PROJECTS

Our in-depth analysis of current and new treatment options is wholly focused on patient outcomes and quality of life – and the results fuel decision-making by patients and physicians alike. Just a few of our research projects include:

- **Regenerative Medicine**

Using patients' own stem cells to heal damaged spinal tissues, regenerative medicine eliminates the need for surgery. We are tracking patient quality of life outcomes using this approach, and preliminary data shows significant improvement.

- **Artificial Disc Replacement (ADR)**

ADR is a minimally invasive alternative to spinal fusion surgery that preserves natural spine movement and reduces stress on discs adjacent to those being treated. We are investigating ADR outcomes using combination materials with a moveable core, helping patients understand the benefits of artificial discs and tracking patients' real-life recovery experiences.

- **Robotic Guided Surgery**

Improving the accuracy of surgical techniques helps speed patients' recovery. Robotic-guided surgery enables surgeons to create detailed preoperative plans and prepare for the entire procedure before ever making an incision. We are gathering data on patient outcomes using different robotic-guided surgery systems, with a goal of identifying the optimal system for each individual patient.





## **SPINEONLINE™**

### A Data-Powered Picture of Spine Health Nationwide

Quality patient data fuels biomedical innovation – and it helps inform better health choices for patients and providers. The National Spine Health Foundation is now building SpineOnline, a secure, web-based service that collects data on patients’ spinal treatment experiences and outcomes through voluntary, confidential surveys. This cloud-based resource allows medical providers to contribute information and access non-identifiable data to inform their recommendations and educate their patients about effective treatment options. SpineOnline is wholly focused on patient benefits, including healing, recovery, and functional improvements in spine health.

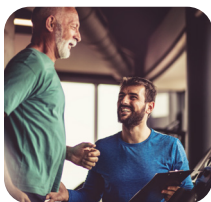


## **THE SPINE HEALTH JOURNAL**

### Our Premier Resource for the Latest in Spine Health Research and Care

Featuring patient-friendly articles and interviews with top spine researchers, surgeons, and healthcare professionals, the Spine Health Journal provides a review of the latest spine health literature for a patient audience. As scientific and technological advances transform spinal healthcare, our expert contributors inform readers about how each new discovery directly impacts patient outcomes. The Journal is published free of charge for patients and professionals – ensuring that timely, unbiased information is available to all who need it.

We have a vision to elevate the Spine Health Journal, transforming it into a peer-reviewed scientific review journal that aggregates and evaluates spine health research for a professional audience. As we work toward this goal, we will continue to provide up-to-date patient information through our Spine Spotlight newsletter and other lay-friendly resources.



## **THE NATIONAL SPINE HEALTH FOUNDATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

### Training Tomorrow’s Spine Health Experts

Cultivating the next generation of scientific leaders and healthcare professionals in spine health is essential to moving the field forward. The National Spine Health Foundation Research Institute is one of the nation’s leading training programs, engaging graduate and undergraduate students in spine health research. These talented young innovators work alongside leading spine physicians and scientists and directly contribute to the development of new therapies. They gain crucial experience testing new treatment interventions and build an unparalleled understanding of patients’ challenges and outcomes; these experiences help prepare them to advocate for their own patients as they enter medical careers and become the spine health leaders of tomorrow.

# PATIENT ADVOCACY

We are building a nationwide movement to make excellent spine health available to everyone.

**It's time to make spine health a national priority.** Debilitating spinal conditions affect millions of people and have a devastating economic and social impact – yet many effective spinal treatments are still considered “experimental” and are not covered by insurance.

Too many patients are forced to simply “live with” the pain, delaying or foregoing the right treatment for their condition due to lack of ability to pay. This leads to untold suffering, lost productivity and quality of life, and compounding health issues that lead to more costly and less effective interventions in the future.

**Everyone has a stake in improving spine health across the United States** – including patients of all ages and walks of life, their families and caregivers, and employers and insurers. It's time for policymakers, providers, and payers alike to truly understand the importance of spine health and support policies that give patients access to the best care.

**The National Spine Health Foundation is building a grassroots community of spine health advocates in every state.** From our powerful Spinal Champions sharing their personal stories to our Medical and Scientific Board of renowned spine experts who tirelessly work to make treatment available to their patients, each member of our community plays a vital role in bringing national attention to this critical issue.

You can be part of this rapidly growing movement by making a gift, sharing your own spine health story, and speaking to your representatives about legislation that will help more patients get their spine treatment covered by insurance.

Philanthropic support and grassroots engagement help fuel our nationwide strategy, elevating the conversation around spine health nationwide.







## RAISING AWARENESS

### The First Step in Creating Solutions for Spine Health

Did you know that October is National Spine Health Awareness Month? The National Spine Health Foundation aims to build a groundswell of support nationwide, both in October and throughout the year. Each year, we host the *We've Got Your Back 5K* run/walk event, including a virtual adaptation of the race in 2020. In 2021, we launched the *Spring Spine Health Challenge*, a five-day online event featuring special email guidance, a live Q&A, and social media outreach to help individuals create healthier spine habits at home. Each event aims to inform and empower individuals nationwide to take charge of their spine health.



## PARTNERING WITH PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS TO ADVOCATE FOR SPINE HEALTH POLICY

The National Spine Health Foundation is rapidly expanding our robust network of advocates for spine health, including partnering with organizations that represent arthritis, osteoporosis, cancer, veterans, sports medicine, chronic pain, and underserved populations in community health centers. Working side-by-side, we can influence new policies that ensure spine health treatments are covered by Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans and Military health services – laying the foundation for robust coverage by private insurers. We also have a presence on the Patient Engagement Advisory Committee at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), a committee that oversees new medical devices that impact spine health, including implants and robotic surgery technologies as well as patient devices such as health wearables.



## AMPLIFYING VOICES FOR SPINE HEALTH ON SOCIAL MEDIA

### Our Spine Health Ambassadors

Not only does raising awareness help encourage legislators to enact spine-friendly health policies, building national awareness means people will be better informed about what they can do to protect their own spine health. Prevention and self-care are crucial to achieving better spine health outcomes, and we aim to put the tools to thrive in every patient's hands. Our social media ambassadors are an essential part of elevating the conversation about spine health.

### **Individuals have a crucial role to play in advancing policy that supports spinal healthcare.**

By reaching out to your representatives and telling your own spine health story – or by expressing your support for proposed legislation – you can have an influence on policy decisions that affect you, your family, and millions of other Americans suffering from debilitating spinal health conditions. Your support for the National Spine Health Foundation amplifies our efforts locally and nationally, enabling us to track and support legislation that works for you, your family, and patients everywhere.

# THANK YOU

Your support can transform a patient's life – and with every patient we help, we change the future of spine health together.

As a nonprofit organization fully devoted to our mission to help patients overcome spinal conditions and get back to their lives, we rely on supporters like you to help fund our patient-centered educational resources, groundbreaking research, and tireless advocacy.

We are grateful for your consideration of a gift to support our mission – and we hope that you, too, will share your own spine health story and become a bold advocate for others.

Together, we can create a future where patients no longer suffer from debilitating spinal conditions. Join us.

For more information, please contact:



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