

The state-of-the-art Spine Center at UMass Memorial offers a wide range of treatment modalities to help you manage your back pain.

We are dedicated to providing evaluation and treatment of all spinal disorders affecting the cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine.

Our team of physicians, including physiatrists, nurse practitioners, physical therapists, psychologists, nurses and medical assistants are specially trained to help you through the highest quality of care for conditions affecting the adult and pediatric spine.

As an academic medical center, our physicians are engaged in ongoing clinical research to advance the surgical and nonsurgical methods of diagnosis and management of patients with spine problems.

UMass Memorial Health Care is the largest not-for-profit health care system in Central Massachusetts with 1,500 physicians and more than 12,000 employees. Our comprehensive network of care includes teaching hospitals, affiliated community hospitals, outpatient clinics, community-based physician practices, long-term care facilities, and home health, hospice, rehabilitation and mental health services. UMass Memorial is dedicated to promoting health and wellness in the community, and is proud to be the clinical partner of the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

Contributions and memorial gifts to UMass Memorial Health Care are deeply appreciated. For information, call the UMass Memorial Foundation at 508-856-5520 or e-mail to giving@umassmed.edu.



Treating Spine Fractures without Surgery

Information for Patients



UMassMemorial

www.umassmemorial.org

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UMassMemorial

Spine fractures can be treated successfully without surgery.

Anatomy of Your Spine

The spinal column is created by multiple vertebrae which are joined by muscles and ligaments. Intervertebral discs separate and cushion each vertebrae. The spine is flexible because each vertebrae is separate.

The spinal column has three different regions: cervical (around the neck), thoracic (in the chest area) and lumbar (low back region).

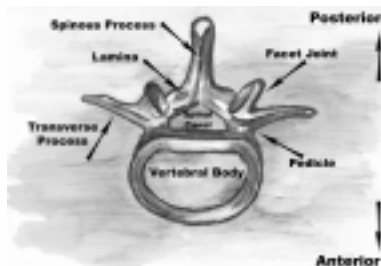
The spinal column houses the spinal cord which consists of nerves that carry and receive signals to and from the arms, legs and many internal organs.



What Is a Spine Fracture?

A fracture is a break or crack in a bone. Types of spine fractures are:

- Burst: a vertebra breaks under strong compression creating shattering pieces
- Compression: a vertebra collapses or loses height under pressure
- Spinous process
- Transverse process



What Causes Spine Fractures?

There are many causes to spinal fractures. The most common are:

- Motor vehicle accidents
- Sports injuries
- Diving accidents
- Trampoline accidents
- Violence (gun shots, stab wounds)
- Birth injuries

What Are the Symptoms of a Spine Fracture?

- Pain from mild to severe
- Swelling
- Inability to move normally
- Deformity

How Is a Spine Fracture Diagnosed?

A spine fracture is diagnosed by a physician through physical examination and diagnostic tests such as x-ray, MRI and/or CT.

What Are the Treatments for a Spine Fracture?

The goal of treatment for spine fractures is to restore stability and avoid motion between the fracture fragments. Treatments vary with the type and severity of the spine fracture. The most severe and unstable fractures will require surgery. Other fractures will require bracing to help immobilize the injured area to promote bone alignment and healing. Bracing also helps reduce acute pain issues.

What Should You Expect Long Term with a Spine Fracture?

With proper immobilization and rehabilitation, including physical therapy and exercise after the fracture is healed, a full recovery is expected with spine fractures.

Additional Things You Should Know about Your Spine Fracture Care

- Routine brace care
- Call with any concerns: tingling, numbness, increased pain, bladder/bowel changes, skin breakdown, etc.
- Passive sexual function can resume at 6 weeks, active at 12 weeks
- No waterbed, sleep instructions per practitioner
- Sit only in firm chairs
- Walk for exercise only with brace on
- No lifting or carrying anything weighing more than five pounds
- Showering with your brace on is okay
- No driving, though you may ride for short distances (trips shorter than one hour)
- Quit smoking: nicotine restricts blood flow to the discs and muscles

For further information regarding spine fractures, please go to:

www.webmd.com

www.back.com

www.spineuniverse.com

Your follow-up appointment is:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location:

Spine Center, UMass Memorial Medical Center –
Memorial Campus

119 Belmont Street, Worcester

With Maribeth Harrigan, APRN, NP-C

To reschedule, call: 508-334-1886 or 508-334-9764