

Kenai Spine

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Soldotna, Alaska 99669
On the campus of Central Peninsula Hospital
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In affiliation with
Central Peninsula Hospital

Alaska's premier fishing guide pain free after spine surgery

Spencer is an avid golfer, outdoorsman and retired professional fishing guide. He played football in college while studying to become an educator. It was not long after finishing college that Spencer first started having some mild back pain.

For many years, he chalked up the pain to aging and the wear and tear on his body from playing sports. Unfortunately, Spencer's back pain worsened, especially on his right side. In addition to his back pain symptoms, Spencer also struggled with hip pain and eventually had a total hip

replacement surgery to relieve his hip pain symptoms.

As the years went by, Spencer went to many different doctors for his back pain, he even traveled to the Mayo Clinic to seek relief. The doctors cautioned Spencer that spine surgery would likely be needed to treat his condition. He was not ready for spine surgery though. Spencer's back pain was manageable for many years through non-surgical spine care, including anti-inflammatories, physical therapy and injection therapy.

In 2010, Spencer's back pain was becoming unbearable. The injection therapy that at first offered some temporary relief was no longer helping at all. Walking was now becoming impossible for Spencer without a walker. And in the back of his mind was the thought that he may eventually require a wheelchair for mobility.

In 2011, Spencer was referred to Dr. Craig Humphreys, a fellowship-trained spine surgeon at Kenai Spine. Spencer called the office to make an appointment. Dr. Humphreys - after learning of Spencer's symptoms - got him into the office quickly.

Dr. Humphreys examined him and ordered diagnostics, including an MRI. After viewing the results of the diagnostics, Dr. Humphreys discussed with Spencer the treatment options for his spine condition. Dr. Humphreys explained to Spencer in detail the surgery that was necessary to relieve his back pain. The surgeon also talked with Spencer about non-surgical options to relieve his pain, including trying another injection for pain relief.

Spencer liked the demeanor of Dr.



Above, Dr. Craig Humphreys (left) talks with Spencer (right) about the treatment options necessary to relieve his back pain symptoms.

Humphreys and was impressed that he also talked about non-surgical options for his condition. After much consideration, Spencer decided to move forward with the spine surgery. He was eager for relief from his back pain and ready to return to activity.

Dr. Humphreys completed the spine surgery in August of 2011. Spencer was out of bed and walking within 12 hours. He felt immediate relief from the back pain that had become a way of life for many years.

Today, Spencer is back to an active lifestyle. He no longer needs assistance to walk and is able to once again enjoy life with his wife of 50 years. He is looking forward to a pheasant hunting trip in South Dakota this fall. Spencer exclaims, "I feel better now than I have in years. Dr. Humphreys helped me get my life back."



Above, Spencer catching a world record Chinook salmon. He was the "Original Famous Kenai River Fishing Guide" and helped put Soldotna and Kenai on the map as the number one Alaska tourist destination.

S. Craig Humphreys, M.D.

Fellowship-Trained Spine Surgeon, Board-Certified Orthopedic Surgeon

Dr. Craig Humphreys earned his undergraduate degree at The University of Notre Dame. After graduating from the University of Notre Dame, he attended Loyola Stritch School of Medicine where he received his medical degree. He then completed an Internship and Residency at Loyola University Medical Center while also volunteering time as an MD in other countries, including India, St. Lucia and Lithuania. Dr. Humphreys then completed a Fellowship in Orthopedic Spine Surgery at The Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. In 1996, he joined the Center for Sports Medicine and Orthopaedics in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where he practiced for more than 15 years with a spine specialized practice attracting complex spine patients from across Tennessee and northern Georgia. Dr. Humphreys' practice philosophy is to explore and exhaust all non-surgical options in advance of the patient considering spine surgery. This includes the use of spine-specialized therapy and injections that can relieve pain symptoms. Kenai Spine includes spine-specialized physical therapy to complement and augment his spine surgery expertise. Dr. Humphreys is glad to be a part of the Alaska medical community, and welcomes other physicians to contact him directly.

