

Kenai Spine

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In affiliation with
Central Peninsula Hospital

Spine surgery repairs damaged disc and returns active outdoorsman to hunting and fishing

Bob started feeling muscular pain in his back and shoulders last summer. His pain was mild at first but gradually worsened. He took some anti-inflammatories to help with his pain symptoms. Bob also went to a chiropractor to seek some relief. Unfortunately, the adjustments did not help and his symptoms continued to worsen.

Bob began feeling numbness and tingling in his left arm and fingers. It wasn't long before he also started having discomfort in his leg which affected his walking. Because of the worsening symptoms, the chiropractor ordered an MRI and after reviewing the results, he told

Bob he needed to see a spine specialist.

Bob was referred to Dr. Craig Humphreys by a physician at Kenai Peninsula Orthopaedics. When Bob met with Dr. Humphreys, he was having difficulty gripping objects because of the numbness and tingling in his arm and fingers. His day to day activities were becoming very limited.

Dr. Humphreys examined Bob and reviewed his MRI, the surgeon then talked with Bob about treatment options to relieve the herniated disc that was pinching his spinal cord at C5/C6. Dr. Humphreys talked with him about non-surgical care, such as injection therapy to help relieve his symptoms. Dr. Humphreys and Bob also discussed the surgery and fusion that would be necessary to treat his herniated disc.

Because of the severity of his condition, surgery would likely be necessary in the future. Bob decided to move forward with the spine surgery and fusion necessary to relieve his herniated disc. Dr. Humphreys performed the surgery and Bob was happy to feel no more pain or weakness in his arm. His leg discomfort was also improved.

One week following surgery, Bob was on a plane to Minnesota where he spent several days hunting and fishing with his grandson and son-in-law. "We fished half

the day and hunted half the day. I was even able to climb up into the tree stand for hunting," he remembers.

"The care I have received from Dr. Humphreys and his staff has been great. Dr. Humphreys even introduced himself to me with his first name. This is unusual," Bob says when asked about his care at Kenai Spine. His condition continues to improve, he has returned to his career in the construction industry. "I enjoy the outdoors so to have my lifestyle limited was difficult for me. My daily life is returning to normal and I am back to two days a week at the gym and getting better by the day," Bob says.



During the spine surgery, Dr. Humphreys removed the piece of damaged disc tissue in the neck area in order to relieve pressure on the spinal cord. Because the structure may become less stable after the piece of the shock-absorbing disc is removed, Dr. Humphreys next fused the vertebrae together to prevent instability.



Bob (above right) traveled to Northern Minnesota and enjoyed hunting and fishing with his grandson and son-in-law (above left) only a week after spine surgery.

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.

