When it comes to treating the spine, an expert, multidisciplinary approach is crucial for achieving the best possible outcomes. At Reading Hospital, you have access to a variety of comprehensive spine treatment options from our nationally recognized neurosciences team.

Your care team will include neurosurgeons, physiatrists, pain management experts, physical and occupational therapists and a range of dedicated specialists. We take a collaborative approach to ensure you receive the highest level of personalized spine care.

- **Spinal Trauma**: As one of only a few hospitals in the region that includes both a highly accredited Trauma Center and post-acute rehabilitation services at our Rehabilitation Hospital, you’ll receive seamlessly coordinated and integrated treatment for your spinal trauma when you turn to Reading Hospital. Using the latest diagnostic techniques, our multidisciplinary team of trauma surgeons and neurosurgeons can identify the location and severity of your injury and determine the best treatment option for you.

- **Degenerative Spine Disease**: The neurosurgeons at Reading Hospital treat more patients with degenerative spinal disorders than most programs in the region — from herniated disc surgery to complex anterior (front of the body) and posterior (back of the body) reconstructive procedures. Our expert team of specialists will always provide clear explanations of your condition.

- **Spinal Infections**: Care begins with a biopsy to identify the cause of infection, followed by targeted antibiotic therapy with close neurological and radiographic surveillance. After initial diagnosis and inpatient treatment, most of your care can be performed in an outpatient setting with your neurosurgeon and infectious disease specialist.

- **Spinal Cord Tumors**: Although metastatic spinal cord tumors are relatively uncommon, patients with this challenging diagnosis can receive comprehensive treatment at Reading Hospital. Your provider will determine the appropriate treatment based on the location, size and extent of your tumor’s infiltration in your body.

- **Back and Neck Pain**: A neurosurgeon and spine specialist will examine your status and provide ways to manage it non-operatively. If physical therapy, physiatry (which includes medical diagnoses) and pain management have not helped your back and neck pain, surgery may be required.
For conditions that have not yet been diagnosed, the most effective way to find a solution is through state-of-the-art diagnostic testing. At Reading Hospital, your testing may include (but is not limited to) the following:

- CT scan
- MRI (magnetic resonance imaging)
- Myelogram
- Flexion/extension films
- Electromyogram (EMG) and nerve conduction studies (NCS)

Once your condition has been determined, you’ll work with one of our expert surgeons to determine the best course of action. A few of the procedures performed at Reading Hospital include:

- **Microdiscectomy**: As one of the most common procedures neurosurgeons perform at Reading Hospital, a microdiscectomy involves the removal of a portion of the bone along the back of the spinal column to remove herniated discs and any additional disc material that may herniate out in the future. This procedure typically only requires a single overnight stay.

- **Laminectomy/Laminotomy**: Often called a “lumbar decompression,” a laminectomy is performed in the lower back and involves removing a small portion of bone and posterior ligament over nerve roots to relieve pinching of the nerve and provide more room for the nerve to heal. A laminotomy surgery is essentially the same, but does not remove the entire lamina. Instead, a hole is made to relieve pinching.

- **Corpectomy**: This procedure involves removing part of the vertebral body to decompress or relieve pressure on the spinal cord and/or spinal nerve.

- **Spinal Fusion**: The goal of a spinal fusion is to stop pain and disability caused by certain degenerative disc diseases or slipping discs. It involves either placing a new disc spacer, or possibly an artificial disc, into space previously occupied by the disc or laying the bone that was removed from the back of the spine along the lateral edges of the spinal column to promote bone healing, new bone formation or to reduce slippage of bones when you move. Once the bones fuse and the abnormal motion is stabilized, you will be able to get back to your life pain-free.

- **Disc Replacement**: A surgeon will remove a damaged spinal disc and insert a new disc spacer, or possibly an artificial disc, between the vertebrae to permit continued motion of the spine. Disc replacement is gaining popularity as an alternative to spinal fusion; however, a detailed discussion between you and your surgeon will determine if you are a candidate for this procedure.

- **Spinal Instrumentation and Stabilization**: After a spinal fusion, most surgeons support the fused segment of the spine by inserting screws, plates and/or rods to promote bone healing and integration across that segment of the spine. This procedure is similar to when orthopedic surgeons place a rod or plate across a broken bone.

- **Vertebroplasty/Kyphoplasty**: As two related procedures, interventional radiologists or neurosurgeons perform these procedures to relieve pain from spinal column tumors or fractures. During this procedure, a type of “cement” is inserted into the vertebral body. Although both vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty have the potential to improve pain significantly, kyphoplasty also attempts to restore the height of broken bones.
After your surgery, you’ll receive thorough and compassionate care from our exceptional nursing staff. Our team is very well-equipped and trained to manage each of our postoperative spine patients and deliver consistent, high-quality care in their designated recovery areas. In fact, our patients have continuously reported high levels of satisfaction in these units — our care follows only the highest-quality standards.

Once you’ve recovered from surgery, sometimes as early as the first postoperative day, you’ll meet physical therapists, occupational therapists and physiatrists — who will provide tremendous support throughout your journey to recovery.

During your hospital stay, you will be followed closely by your surgeon and other caregivers until the time of discharge.

Your follow-up care after discharge will be coordinated by our multidisciplinary spine team. You will generally be seen by your surgical care team within 1-2 weeks of discharge from the hospital.

Follow-up appointments after your first postoperative visit will be based on your progress, type of surgery, and whether physical therapy or other treatment options are recommended.

Throughout your recovery, you may feel free to contact your caregivers with any questions or concerns you may have.

If you’d like to learn more about the different neurological treatment options at Reading Hospital, click here to receive your free guide.