



Providing a non-surgical treatment option for disc-related back and neck pain — at a predictable bundled rate

The symptoms of radiating pain or numbness in a foot or hand all imply a herniated disc in the back or neck that is impinging upon a nerve root, according to Dr. Rich Mazzaferro, a board-certified physical medicine & rehabilitation specialist at Quincy Spine Center who specializes in interventional spine care. “Unfortunately, many of those with these disc-related symptoms are never told they can avoid a spine surgery with a 20-minute injection. Instead, some patients are express-laned to spine surgery which in some cases can cause scarring around a nerve root and failed back surgery syndrome which is far worse than the original problem. So for these patients, a simple \$700 injection that has them home an hour later, can eliminate the need for spine surgery altogether.”

Because Quincy Spine Center has its own internal injection suite, the spine center is able to provide a spinal injection in a more comfortable and less-threatening environment than a hospital operating room or surgery center. ASC’s and hospitals also have more red tape and admission paperwork, making for a longer time in the facility. Dr. Mazzaferro, like thousands of other top-trained spinal injection specialists, prefer an office-based injection suite. “We have the most current OEC 9900 C-arm and support equipment found in any ASC or hospital surgery suite,” says Dr. Mazzaferro. “An ASC or hospital operating room is really geared to do complex open surgery. The person needing a simple spinal injection doesn’t need that, but they are getting billed for it all.”

The typical cost for a spinal injection performed in an ASC can exceed \$1,500. If the spinal injection is performed in a hospital, the patient might be billed several thousand dollars. The cash-pay price relates to those patients who either don’t have insurance and want to pay out of pocket, or for those patients who have insurance but will be responsible for payment of their deductible above the \$700 bundled rate. Those with insurance who desire the cash pay price would be responsible for filing the necessary forms to their carrier document their payment for the purpose of meeting their deductible.

Across the nation, employers are revising their health insurance plans to shift insurance coverage toward catastrophic care, which in turn creates a higher deductible and higher co-pay for the covered employee — IF the employee is lucky to have employer-provided health insurance at all. Others without employer-provided insurance are left to shop for some insurance coverage. There are those who will elect to have no health insurance at all because of the cost.

With that in mind, Quincy Spine Center provides the option of a \$700 “cash-pay” bundled price for those patients needing injection therapy. The bundled rate relates to those who have no insurance or have to pay out of pocket for care. The rate can be especially helpful to those who have a \$1,000 to \$5,000 deductible in their health plan.

For those with health insurance that covers their out of pocket cost, Quincy Spine Center will continue to file their insurance. The “cash pay” price does not affect those patients with health insurance coverage, Medicare or Medicaid, Tri-Care where Quincy Spine Center would continue to file insurance for the patient less any deductible.

“For a person with radicular pain or numbness and weakness in a extremity, a spinal injection can relieve these symptoms and the person can be home an hour later,” explains Dr. Mazzaferro. “However, few patients needing a spinal injection are told of the wide variation in cost. They first learn about it when a bill arrives from a hospital or surgery center for more than \$2,000. We are just providing another option for the person who has to shoulder more out-of-pocket cost.”

More information about can be obtained by calling Quincy Spine Center at 617-773-6300.

Physician bio

Dr. Richard Mazzaferro

Board-certified Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Dr. Richard Mazzaferro is a board-certified specialist in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation with more than 15 years experience in spine.

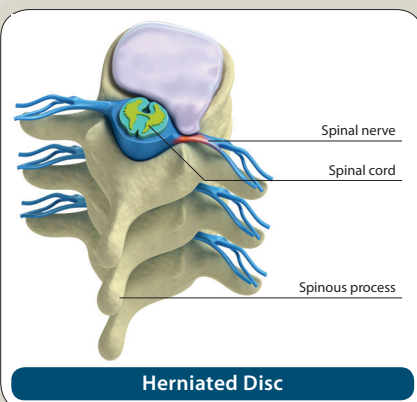
Dr. Mazzaferro is proficient in the use of lumbar and cervical interventional pain procedures. In 2002, he finished his residency training at the Harvard Medical School’s Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Dr. Mazzaferro then returned to active duty in the Army until 2006. From 2002-2006 he served as Chief of the Interventional Spine Pain Management Service at the Eisenhower Army Medical Center in Augusta, Georgia. In 2006, he received the United States Army’s prestigious Meritorious Service Medal for his work at the Eisenhower Army Medical Center. Dr. Mazzaferro was promoted to Lt. Colonel and completed his reserve duty obligations in February 2013.



Subsequent to his medical career in the military, Dr. Mazzaferro created Quincy Spine Center because he recognized that back and neck pain required a specialized approach.

By combining physical medicine, injection therapy, and then spine therapy under one roof, Quincy Spine Center is typically able to determine the cause of back and neck pain and provide non-surgical treatment options that can help the patient avoid an unnecessary spine surgery.

“We take the time to educate patients so they understand the cause of their back or neck problem and how best to relieve symptoms,” says Dr. Mazzaferro. “We can be especially helpful to worker’s compensation patients who have injured themselves on the job, as we provide an unbiased assessment of their problem, and help them return to activity and their job.”



HOW INJECTIONS WORK

Medication is injected into the area surrounding a nerve root, which reduces inflammation and relieves pain. Relief from such injections can last anywhere from a few weeks to a few months and sometimes longer, especially if therapy is used simultaneously to strengthen muscles in the back.

A second opinion can reveal spine surgery isn't necessary

Many people do not realize that many studies show that nonsurgical treatment options for back and neck pain can yield similar long-term results to spine surgery.

A second opinion at Quincy Spine Center can provide other treatment options to a patient than having to resort to spine surgery.

Although surgery can be an appropriate option, many cases of back and neck pain can respond well to nonsurgical treatments and home remedies.

Many times, surgeons who are biased towards surgery may fail to share the array of non-surgical treatment options available to the patient. Part of the problem is that some surgeons are simply not knowledgeable or trained in the array of nonsurgical options that are available today.

Quincy Spine Center exhausts non-surgical options first. This includes the use of spinal injections that can relieve the pressure caused by a herniated disc pressing on adjacent nerve roots.

The typical symptoms of disc-related problems is pain that radiates into a leg or arm.

A more serious symptom, however, is where the patient experience numbness or weakness into a hand or foot. "The patient cannot use watchful waiting for numbness or weakness because

those symptoms can become permanent and lifelong if they wait beyond a few days to relieve the pressure on the nerve," explains Dr. Mazzaferro.

Dr. Mazzaferro also notes that having a spinal injection at Quincy Spine Center is far more convenient than having to navigate through a hospital campus and park in a parking structure.

Quincy Spine Center has a convenient location off I-93 and Pilgrims Highway. Patients have free parking outside the building and easy access to the spine center.



Using C-arm fluoroscopy guidance, medication is injected into the area surrounding a nerve root which reduces inflammation and relieves symptoms of radiating pain or numbness and weakness in a leg or arm. A spinal injection can make a spine surgery unnecessary.

QUINCY SPINE CENTER SYMPTOM CHART

UNDERSTANDING YOUR BACK OR NECK SYMPTOMS:

WHEN YOU CAN USE WATCHFUL WAITING & WHEN YOU CANNOT

NOTE: A person may use "watchful waiting" for a few days for symptoms of muscle strain or even radiating pain into an arm or leg. However, ANY WEAKNESS OR NUMBNESS in an arm or leg, or loss of control of bowel or bladder, are emergency symptoms. You need to see a spine specialist promptly (as noted below) to prevent the symptoms from becoming permanent.

PAIN LIMITED TO THE NECK:

Neck pain can be caused by traumatic injury, like whiplash from a car accident, or muscle or ligament strain. See our Home Remedies section on our Internet site. If pain persists beyond a week, you should see a spine specialist to determine the underlying cause.

FEVER, DROWSINESS, SEVERE HEADACHE, NAUSEA, VOMITING, UNUSUAL SENSITIVITY TO LIGHT?

Other symptoms may be unrelated to a back or neck problem, like cervical meningitis. This can be serious. You should consult a physician immediately for any of the above symptoms.

RADIATING PAIN IN THE ARM: Pain that radiates into an arm below the elbow can imply a herniated disc in the neck. Many times, radiating pain can be treated non-surgically. Radiating pain should be seen by a spine specialist within 2 weeks.

LOSS OF BOWEL OR BLADDER CONTROL:

This is a **SERIOUS** emergency symptom (cauda equina) that needs to be treated immediately by a spine surgeon within 24 hours. If you experience these symptoms at night or on the weekend, go to the emergency room. If not treated quickly, the person may lose control over their bowel and bladder permanently.

NUMBNESS OR WEAKNESS IN ARM OR HAND:

Numbness or weakness in the arm or hand is a more serious disc-related symptom that is **NOT** appropriate for watchful waiting. Left untreated, the symptom can become permanent. You should see a spine specialist within 3 days.

RADIATING PAIN INTO THE LEG:

Pain that radiates into a leg below the knee can imply a herniated disc in the low back. But many times radiating pain can be treated non-surgically. Radiating pain should be seen by a spine specialist within 2 weeks.

NUMBNESS OR WEAKNESS IN LEG OR FOOT:

Numbness or weakness in the leg or foot is a **SERIOUS** disc-related symptom that is **NOT** appropriate for watchful waiting. Left untreated, the symptom can become permanent. You should see a spine specialist within 3 days.

TRAUMA / FALL/ACCIDENT:

Any time you fall, are in a car accident, or could have fractured a bone in your back, you should see a spine specialist immediately!

PAIN LIMITED TO THE LOW BACK:

Pain that is limited to the low back may be the result of muscle strain. While pain spasms can be excruciating, muscle strain problems do not require surgery. See our Home Remedies section on our Internet site for special stretches that can relieve pain, and the proper use of anti-inflammatories. While less common, a kidney infection or kidney stone may also cause low back pain symptoms. Consequently, you should consult a spine specialist accordingly for symptoms that persist beyond 5 days to determine the cause of your symptoms and the best treatment options, including a customized home exercise program that will make the back stronger, more flexible and resistant to future strain.

FOOT DROP / WEAKNESS IN FOOT:

If pain, weakness or numbness extends into the foot so that you are unable to lift your toe as you walk, that is called Foot Drop, which is an emergency disc-related symptom. You need a spine specialist within 48 hours. If not treated promptly, it could lead to permanent weakness in the foot.

Those who self diagnose and self treat themselves do so at their own risk. We accept no responsibility for any problems that may result from the use or misuse of educational information intended to be helpful guidance. Copyright © 2016 Prizm • All Rights Reserved



REFERRALS & 2ND OPINIONS

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