

Dear Patient,

Welcome, and thank you for choosing me to help you with your spine condition. I know that getting to this appointment may have taken time, effort, and a fair amount of patience, and I do not take that lightly. Before we meet, I want to introduce myself and explain how you can help me give you the most accurate diagnosis and the best possible care.

I am a board-certified orthopedic surgeon and fellowship-trained spine specialist with more than fourteen years of experience. I completed my orthopedic residency at Brooke Army Medical Center, where I spent an additional year focused on spine surgery and research alongside the neurosurgical department, and I completed my spine fellowship at UC Davis. I served as a U.S. Army spine surgeon, including deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, and I have been privileged to provide care on surgical missions in Honduras and Ghana. I share this not to impress you, but so you know that when you sit down across from me, you are working with someone who has dedicated his career to the spine and who takes your problem seriously.

Here is something I want you to understand about how I practice: I personally review everything you bring me, in detail. I read your health history. I read your prior operative reports. And I look carefully at every image you bring — not a summary, not just the radiology report, but the actual films. The more complete and accurate your information is, the better I can understand exactly what is going on and recommend the right treatment for you.

That is why I ask two things of you before your visit:

**First, please fill out the New Patient Health History Form completely and honestly.** Every question on that form exists for a reason. Details that may seem minor to you — an old surgery, a medication, a past injury, a family history — can change my entire assessment. Blank spaces leave me guessing, and I would much rather know than guess.

**Second, please bring all pertinent records with you to your appointment.** This includes operative reports from any prior spine surgery, and any imaging you have — ideally on a disk (CD) so I can view the actual images, not just the written report. If you have had MRIs, CT scans, or X-rays elsewhere, bring them.

I also prefer that patients have recent X-rays available at the time of the visit, and you will find that we frequently arrange for new X-rays to be taken before your appointment. I completely understand that all of this can feel tedious — another errand, another disk to track down, another stop before you even see me. But I promise you it is worth it. Accurate, up-to-date imaging and a complete history are what allow me to make a correct diagnosis rather than an educated guess, and a correct diagnosis is the foundation of good treatment.

If you would like to learn more about spine conditions and the procedures I perform before we meet, I invite you to visit my YouTube channel, [@hurleyspine](#), where I share patient education videos in plain language.

I look forward to meeting you and to working together toward getting you feeling better.

Sincerely,

**Richard Hurley Jr., MD**

*Board-Certified Orthopedic Surgeon | Fellowship-Trained Spine Surgeon*