



SOUTHEASTERN NEUROSURGICAL SPECIALISTS

Patient Name: _____ Appointment Date / Time: _____

Welcome to Southeastern Neurosurgical Specialists! Our office is located at 980 Johnson Ferry Rd NE, Suite 490, Atlanta GA 30342. We are on the Northside Hospital Atlanta campus. The office phone number is (404) 299-3338, or (404) 254-3160. This letter is intended to explain our process and answer questions you may have about your first appointment.

You are being referred to Dr. Khajavi to determine if spine surgery is a reasonable option to help alleviate your symptoms. Our team can often determine if a pinched nerve in the spine is the cause of leg or arm pain, and sometimes those conditions are amenable to surgery. Back and neck pain, however, are more complicated, and it is difficult for any healthcare provider to pinpoint the exact cause. Consequently, with some exceptions, surgery is generally not the best option for those with primarily back or neck pain (with little to no pain radiating into the arms or legs).

It's important to understand that although we are a neurosurgical spine surgery practice, the majority of patients we see do not need any spine surgery. We emphasize education, healthy lifestyle, and conservative treatment (such as physical therapy or pain management) over surgery most of the time. If surgery is recommended, it will likely be for patients who have a lot of leg or arm pain, or weakness, and we will always suggest the least invasive surgery possible. If we do not recommend surgery, please know that we understand you have back or neck pain, but we think it is unlikely that surgery will alleviate your pain (and surgery may make it worse).

FIRST VISIT

For your first visit, please bring with you:

- ✓ **A disc with all your most recent spine imaging studies.** This may include x-rays, MRI, CT or other films. If you have older films, please bring those also. Please note that reports are not sufficient, we need to review the actual imaging studies.
- ✓ Any recent lab results.
- ✓ A list of all medications you are taking.
- ✓ Your insurance card and co-pay.
- ✓ Your referral from your primary care physician (if required).

You will also be asked to complete some new patient paperwork, which updates your medical and demographic data and gives us more information regarding your spine problem. These forms may be obtained prior to your visit and completed prior to the date of your visit. You can call us to email you a copy of the forms, or you can download a copy at <https://www.gaspine.com/patients/>

Please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment. If you have not filled out ALL forms ahead of time, you must **arrive at least 30 minutes prior** to the scheduled visit time. If you are late for your appointment, we may have to reschedule your visit, as seeing you late will cause us to be late for all of the patients the rest of the day.

Canton / Marietta

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SANDY SPRINGS

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OUR PROCESS

Since we have a high volume of patient referrals, we use a standard screening process.

- All new patients are initially seen and evaluated by our physician assistant (Patty Braun, PA) or our nurse practitioner (Maggie Dotson, NP). They will take a detailed history and perform a thorough examination, then review your case with Dr. Khajavi.
- If there is sufficient information and imaging studies to determine that surgery might be a potential option, and it seems that you have exhausted all non-surgical options, then Dr. Khajavi will see you at the initial visit (or at the next visit if additional studies or information is needed).
- If it is determined that you are not a surgical candidate (at the initial or follow up appointments), then non-surgical treatment recommendations will be made and Dr. Khajavi likely will not see you. Please keep in mind that while Dr. Khajavi would like to see every patient personally, his expertise is in spine surgery, and he needs to spend considerable time reviewing surgical options for those patients requiring surgery, many of whom have complicated spinal problems. Not needing spine surgery is usually very good news. Rest assured Dr. Khajavi reviews every case and the imaging studies before deciding about the appropriateness of surgery.
- Finally, it's important to understand that we are an imaging-based specialty. This means that the imaging studies that we order, such as MRIs, x-rays, CT scans, and bone density studies, are critical to our decision-making process. If we order imaging studies, it is imperative that you have these studies completed BEFORE the follow up appointment and confirm that we have those studies prior to your follow up appointment. If the studies are done within the Northside system, we will be able to access them easily. If they are done outside the Northside system, it is your responsibility to send or bring us the imaging information on a disc to make sure that we can see the studies prior to your follow-up visit (in person or telemedicine). Of note, if a non-Northside Imaging Center tells you they will send us the studies, please understand they will only send the report, and without the actual studies we cannot make any determination regarding your condition.

Please call our office if you have any questions. Thank you for choosing Dr. Khajavi and Southeastern Neurosurgical Specialists. We look forward to seeing you.

I have read this letter and agree to the terms.

Signature of Patient or Legal Representative

Relationship (self, parent, etc.)

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