

# Michael's Comeback

*How successful spine surgery restored Portage man's quality of life*

**"Now, I can move. I can help around the house, and my wife and I are both happy."**

Michael Morris  
Portage, IN



Nicholas Wallace, MD  
Orthopedic  
Spine Surgery

For Michael Morris of Portage, the summer of 2024 was a season of immobility and unrelenting pain. A retired steelworker who had already endured three back surgeries over 15 years, Michael suddenly found himself nearly bedridden with severe neck pain radiating down his right arm.

"It was worse than anything I'd ever experienced," Michael recalls. "By the Fourth of July, I couldn't move without extreme pain."

With pain management no longer effective, his nurse practitioner at Centers for Pain Control referred him to Nicholas Wallace, MD, orthopedic spine surgeon at Methodist Hospitals. After a thorough evaluation at his Crown Point office, Dr. Wallace diagnosed a severely ruptured disc pressing on Michael's spinal cord. Surgery, he determined, was the best solution.

"In many cases we can begin with more conservative treatments, such as therapy and medications," Dr. Wallace said. "But Michael's condition was progressive and unresponsive to non-operative measures."

A cervical discectomy and fusion is a procedure performed to alleviate nerve symptoms that can arise from herniated discs pinching the spinal nerves, as was the case for Michael.

"Dr. Wallace was compassionate and straightforward," Michael said. "He explained everything clearly – what was wrong, what he planned to do, and later, what he did do. He also put my wife at ease, which meant a lot since she works in healthcare and was nervous about the procedure."

Dr. Wallace performed the surgery in September of last year. The procedure included grafting a cadaver bone to stabilize Michael's spine. He spent two days recovering at Methodist Hospitals Southlake campus, where, he notes, "the nurses were great, the care was outstanding and even the food was good."

The results were immediate.

"When I woke up, even with all the bandages, I realized the pain was gone," Michael said. "I actually cried from relief. I hadn't felt that kind of freedom from pain in months."

Within two months, Michael was back to his normal routine – taking care of his home, helping his wife, and enjoying everyday activities that the pain had previously stolen from him.

"I lost my summer before the surgery because I couldn't do anything, not even mow the lawn or sit outside comfortably," he says. "Now, I can move. I can help around the house, and my wife and I are both happy."

Reflecting on his experience, Michael rates his care a "ten out of ten."

"Our Orthopedic-Spine Center is more than just surgeons—it's an entire team working together for the patient's recovery," said Dr. Wallace. "From our highly skilled nurses and physical therapists to our pain management specialists, every member of the team plays a vital role in helping patients heal faster, regain mobility, and get back to the lives they love."

Nicholas Wallace, MD, is an orthopedic spine surgeon practicing at the Northwest Indiana Orthopedic-Spine Center at Methodist Hospitals. To learn more, call 219-738-6670.

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