

# CHEROKEE

LIVING

**Dr. Craig Chebuhar**

*Cherokee's Cutting-Edge Spinal Surgeon*

*Chairman Mike Byrd  
Talks About  
Traffic... Traffic... Traffic*

*Children's Emergency Shelter  
of Cherokee County*

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## Dr. Craig Chebuhar: Cherokee's Cutting-edge Spinal Surgeon

The bad news: your back is killing you. It hurts when you lie down; it hurts when you stand. Your hips ache, and there's constant pain shooting down your legs. You are miserable, and your life seems to be spiraling out of control.

The good news: world-class, compassionate, state-of-the-art back care is available here in Cherokee County with Dr. Craig Chebuhar, director of Pinnacle Orthopaedic's Spine Center, with offices in Canton, Woodstock and Marietta. Chebuhar is a nationally acclaimed spinal surgeon, attracting patients from as far away as Texas and New Jersey.

More good news: with the latest in innovative minimally-invasive surgical techniques, you can expect a shorter recovery time, less surgical trauma and less post-op pain than in recent years.

Susan Roper, a life-long Cherokee County resident, says she is doing things that she hasn't been able to do in years, and enjoying life more thanks to Dr. Chebuhar and his staff at Pinnacle Spine Center. Suffering for years from degenerative disk disease, she says she felt relief as soon as she woke up from her lumbar fusion surgery in March. "The pain in my hips and legs was gone. I could tell the difference immediately," Roper exclaims. "Dr. Chebuhar is very nice. He has a real no-nonsense approach. And his staff is wonderful," she adds.

Chebuhar explains that as recently as a few years ago lumbar fusion surgery was performed through a six-to-eight-inch incision and involved a four-to-five-day hospital stay. Now he routinely works through a two-inch incision and patients are released from the hospital in one to three days. He adds that he is one of the few area



surgeons who routinely performs outpatient lumbar microdisectomy, the removal of a herniated disk through a small one-inch incision. "Herniated disk excision traditionally required a hospital stay of one or two days, but now we're able to do this on an outpatient basis." Other innovations he pioneers include: unilateral instrumented interbody fusion, kyphoplasty for osteoporotic compression fractures, percutaneous disc decompression and the use of BMP (bone morphogenetic protein) for spinal fusions, which eliminates the need for a bone graft from the patient's pelvis.

Chebuhar, who lectures internationally and frequently has physicians from around the country come here to train with him, says that patients like Roper motivate him to succeed. "Often the entire lives of patients with neck or back pain are significantly impacted by that pain. I consider it a personal challenge to relieve their pain and suffering and restore their vitality."

Undoubtedly Chebuhar attracts many patients because of his reputation as a pioneer in minimally-invasive spinal surgery. Health care professionals often send their friends and family members to him for treatment. But he also gets many word-of-mouth referrals from satisfied patients largely because of his per-

sonal approach to patient treatment. "I try and treat every patient as though they are a member of my family. The decision I make regarding the appropriate treatment then becomes very clear," says Chebuhar.

"You often hear the stories about the patients that don't do well with back surgery. But it's rewarding to know that when we give patients the appropriate care, the vast majority of their conditions will significantly improve," explains Chebuhar. "Often my patients have had ongoing progressive problems for years which have created dramatic disruptions in their lifestyle and emotional as well as physical difficulties affecting the quality of their lives. They need a compassionate attentive ear to help them work through this as well as surgical expertise," Chebuhar adds.

Additionally, Chebuhar is able to offer his patients convenience and consistency. Pinnacle Spine Center is an all-inclusive diagnostic and treatment facility and is the only practice in the area that has digital radiology (high-definition x-rays). The center is comprised of board certified surgeons and physiatrists (non-surgical spine specialists) who work in conjunction with physical therapists, pain management physicians, neurologists and chiropractors to optimize

patient care. "Often spinal care is fragmented. The patient goes one place for x-rays and evaluation, then to another facility for therapy, or to another doctor for injections, then to another doctor to discuss surgical options," says Chebuhar. "Fortunately, here at The Pinnacle Spine Center, we offer complete state-of-the-art care and facilities."

## **SEVEN SIGNS That You Need to See a Back Care Specialist Immediately**

1. Back pain extending down your legs.
2. Increased pain when lifting your knee to your chest or bending over.
3. Severe back pain following a recent fall.
4. Significant back pain lasting more than three weeks.
5. Back pain that becomes worse when you rest, or wakes you up at night.
6. Persistent bladder or bowel problems.
7. Numbness or weakness in your legs while walking.

Things you can do to maintain a healthy back are: quit smoking, maintain a normal weight and exercise at least three times a week.

(From the National American Spine Society: [www.spine.org](http://www.spine.org))

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*You can reach Pinnacle Spine Center at its three locations: Canton (770) 345-5717, Woodstock (770) 926-9112 or Marietta (770) 427-5717.*