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Rockford Spine Center Discusses Arthritis of the Spine *May is National Arthritis Awareness Month*

Rockford, IL (May 13, 2014) – Arthritis affects 46 million adults and 300,000 children in the United States. The month of May is National Arthritis Month – a time dedicated to inform and educate patients to the treatments available for arthritis, or joint inflammation. Rockford Spine Center, a facility dedicated exclusively to spinal care, is taking this opportunity to share some tips regarding spinal arthritis.

“At Rockford Spine Center, we strive to not simply treat our patients, but to inform and educate them as well,” says Dr. Marie Walker, Rockford Spine Center. “Knowing when to seek treatment and implementing a proper lifestyle will help patients avoid pain and improve their overall quality of life.”

Arthritis is actually an umbrella term that includes more than 100 different rheumatic diseases. Three in particular that affect the spine are Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) and Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS).

- Osteoarthritis, or degenerative joint disease, is a condition in which the protective cartilage that cushions the tops of bones wears away. This causes swelling and pain, bone spurs in some cases and can lead to spinal stenosis.
- RA is a chronic inflammatory disorder that typically affects the small joints in the hands and feet. It affects the lining of the joints, causing a painful swelling that can eventually result in bone erosion and joint deformity.
- AS is a chronic inflammatory disease that primarily affects the spine, particularly the sacroiliac joints near the pelvis and the hip joints. Symptoms associated with AS include pain in the lower back and buttocks. Patients will often notice increased pain after resting or upon waking up and decreased pain after exercise or a hot shower.

While the likelihood of getting arthritis typically increases with age, it can impact people of all ages. Some people suffer from arthritis because their anatomy makes them more prone to the condition and others can get arthritis from severe accidents.

Dr. Walker offers the following tips on when to seek help:

- If you notice pain, tingling or weakness in the arms, hands, legs or feet
- If the pain is consistent and worsens over time
- If you're unable to walk and/or conduct daily activities
- If your overall quality of life is affected

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“Although there is no “cure” for arthritis, a treatment plan may include proper exercise, posture and injections. There are also medications available to reduce pain and stiffness,” says Dr. Walker. “For the severe cases involving curvature of the spine, degenerating discs or bone spurs, surgery may be an option.”

To learn more about spinal arthritis or Rockford Spine Center, visit www.rockfordspine.com.

About Rockford Spine Center

Rockford Spine Center, a facility dedicated exclusively to spinal care, has the combined expertise of three fellowship trained spine surgeons, and a Mayo Clinic-trained physiatrist.

Rockford Spine Center’s team of experts uses a multidisciplinary approach to treat spinal disorders, ranging from simple to the most complex cases. The team has an internationally recognized expertise in surgical and non-surgical spinal disorders. Rockford Spine Center has earned national recognition in Newsweek, is ranked among the Top 50 Spine Surgery Practices to Know in Becker’s Spine Review and has earned the Patients’ Choice and Compassionate Doctor awards since 2011. For more information about Rockford Spine Center, visit the company’s website at www.rockfordspine.com or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RockfordSpine.

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