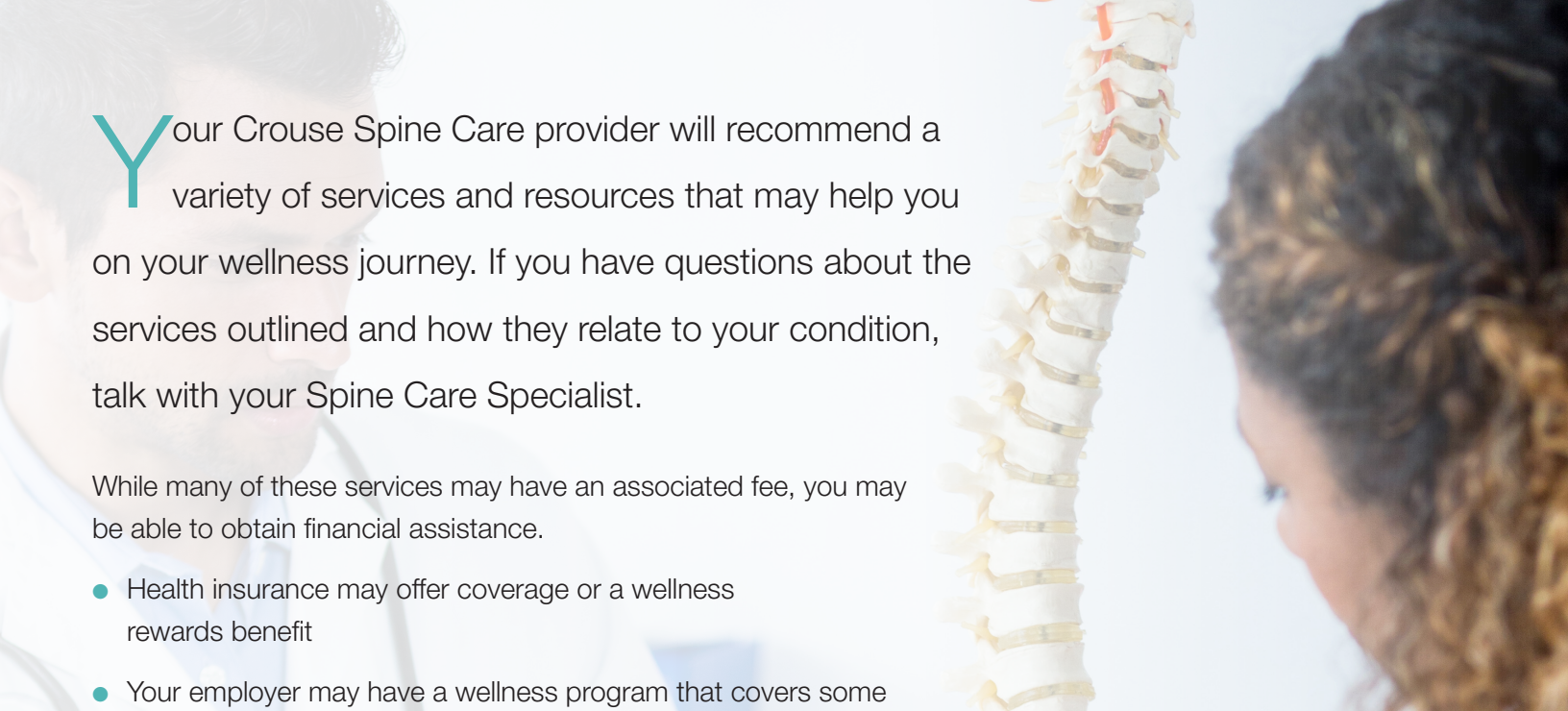




# Spine Wellness Resource Guide.



comprehensive • collaborative • personalized



Your Crouse Spine Care provider will recommend a variety of services and resources that may help you on your wellness journey. If you have questions about the services outlined and how they relate to your condition, talk with your Spine Care Specialist.

While many of these services may have an associated fee, you may be able to obtain financial assistance.

- Health insurance may offer coverage or a wellness rewards benefit
- Your employer may have a wellness program that covers some or all of the cost
- If you have access to a tax-favored plan, such as a Flexible Spending Account (FSA), Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) or a Health Savings Account (HSA) through your employer, you may be able to use those funds to cover your out-of-pocket expenses for services below (per Internal Revenue Service Publication 502):
  - Co-pays or expenses related to medical, chiropractic and psychology services
  - Smoking cessation programs, related prescriptions and nicotine replacement therapy
  - Yoga\*
  - Weight-loss programs\*
  - Health club dues\*
  - Massage therapy expenses\*

\*Covered with a physician's letter of medical necessity and diagnosis; contact your plan provider for specific requirements.

To verify your plan's specific requirements for coverage, check with your employer, benefit vendor, and/or tax advisor. To learn more about these plans or your ability to enroll, check with your employer or health plan provider.

Source: [irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p502.pdf](https://irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p502.pdf)

# Yoga

Recent studies of people with chronic low-back pain suggest that a carefully adapted set of yoga poses may help reduce pain and improve function (the ability to walk and move). Studies also suggest that practicing yoga (as well as other forms of regular exercise) might have other health benefits, such as reducing heart rate and blood pressure, and may also help relieve anxiety and depression.

- One NCCIH-funded study of 90 people with chronic low-back pain found that participants who practiced Iyengar yoga had significantly less disability, pain and depression after six months.
- Conclusions from another 2011 study of 313 adults with chronic or recurring low-back pain suggested that 12 weekly yoga classes resulted in better function than usual medical care alone.

Source: [nccih.nih.gov/health/yoga/introduction.htm](http://nccih.nih.gov/health/yoga/introduction.htm)

# Smoking Cessation

Smoking can slow the healing of back injuries or surgeries. Conventional quit-smoking treatments, including counseling and medication, can double or triple the chances that a smoker will quit successfully. Some people also try complementary health approaches to help them kick the smoking habit. Current evidence suggests that some mind and body practices — such as mindfulness meditation-based therapies, yoga (see yoga section above), and relaxation techniques (guided imagery or progressive muscle relaxation) — may help people quit smoking. Crouse Spine Care providers can help you quit smoking by working with you during office visits or by phone.

Source: [nccih.nih.gov/health/smoking](http://nccih.nih.gov/health/smoking)

**IMPORTANT: Recognize that during your journey to becoming smoke free, you may become stressed or challenged dealing with this change. Crouse Spine Care providers are available to help you through these times. Ask your Spine Care Specialist or call our office for more information.**

## Tips on Getting Started

1. Talk with your Spine Care Specialist to see if yoga is right for you.
2. Ask a trusted source, such as your healthcare provider, family, friends and co-workers for recommendations of yoga instructors and studios.
3. Talk with the instructor about any health issues you may have, so the instructor can help you practice in a way that is effective and safe for you.
4. Once you get the hang of it, you may even want to try out some web-based videos or a smartphone app to help you continue your habit!

## Tips on Getting Started

1. Schedule an appointment with our on-site provider who can support you in this journey.
2. Contact your insurance provider to see what coverage or programs are available for smoking cessation, such as coaching programs, prescriptions and nicotine replacement products (ex: nicotine gum and patches).
3. Research different personal coaching options available delivered via phone, text or other technology methods, such as
  - New York State Smoker's Quitline (Visit [nysmokefree.com/register](http://nysmokefree.com/register)).
  - Smokefree.gov with information and coaching specific to adults, women, teens, pregnancy/moms, veterans and seniors.
  - Smartphone apps such as QuitGuide (free and recommended by smokefree.gov).

## Tips on Getting Started

1. Talk to your Spine Care Specialist or Primary Care Provider about challenges you are facing.
2. Schedule an appointment with our on-site provider specializing in this area (then you can determine if you would like to continue working with this provider in person or via phone).

## Dealing with Change, Chronic Pain or Physical Limitations

It is important to recognize that challenges with your physical health can also cause mental and emotional stress — and stress can then further impact your physical health. Crouse Spine Care offers providers who can help you manage these challenges, who can work with you during in-person visits and by phone.

## Tips on Getting Started

1. Contact our Spine Care Center for a referral to our on-site Registered Dietitian, Matt Kertesz.
2. If you have a Body Mass Index over 35, ask your Primary Care Provider about weight-loss surgery (for information about the Crouse Health Weight-loss Surgery Program, visit [crouse.org/weightloss](http://crouse.org/weightloss)).

## Eating Healthy and Weight Loss

Too much weight can stress the back and cause pain. Excessive weight also increases the risks associated with surgery and anesthesia, and severe obesity increases surgery time and blood loss. If needed, reducing your weight or preventing weight gain will be an important part of your spine care (and preparing for surgery, if applicable).

## Tips on Getting Started

1. Talk with your Spine Care Specialist to see if massage therapy is right for you.
2. Ask a trusted source such as your healthcare provider, family, friends and co-workers for recommendations on massage therapists.
3. Talk with the therapist about any health issues you may have, so the therapist can focus on these areas in an effective and safe manner.

## Massage Therapy

Scientific evidence shows that massage may help with back pain and may improve quality of life. The term “massage therapy” includes many techniques and the type of massage given usually depends on your needs and physical condition.

*Source: [nccih.nih.gov/health/massage/massageintroduction.htm](http://nccih.nih.gov/health/massage/massageintroduction.htm)*

**As always, before beginning any new type of regimen, check with your healthcare provider.**