

PORTLAND HEALTHCARE PROFILES

BEST PRACTICE ALWAYS

Portland-based neurosurgeon **Richard S. Polin, M.D.**, balances experience in multiple subspecialties with a focus on doing what's best for every patient.



When first visiting the office of board-certified neurosurgeon Richard S. Polin, M.D., one will immediately receive a professional yet warm welcome from the clinic's staff. Dr. Polin enjoys connecting with every patient and makes a point to personalize their care wherever possible. His experience and passion for understanding and treating diseases of the brain, spine, and nerves is paramount. Certified by The American Board of Neurological Surgery and Fellowship trained in multiple subspecialties, Dr. Polin is a recognized specialist in both conventional and minimally invasive surgical techniques for treating various neurological disorders.

Despite this expertise—quantified by thousands of patients successfully treated and countless accolades received—he's not one to forget how the gravity of his work reflects on every patient's life.

"Even a routine back or neck surgery carries consequential decisions that the individual patient will have to make," he says. "The surgical treatment they will undergo is often the biggest thing in their life, and I try not to lose that perspective."



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RICHARD S. POLIN, M.D.

A Mind for Neurosurgery

Dr. Polin's father is a well-known child psychiatrist, and his mother possesses a Ph.D. in psychology, so it is no surprise that Dr. Polin was drawn to the brain while in medical school, where professors encouraged him to pursue neurological surgery. He was accepted into residency in the neurosurgical program at the University of Virginia—the country's top-ranking program at that time and the seat of pioneering research.

After completing his residency and multiple fellowship programs, he spent several years serving on the faculties of university hospital neurosurgical departments on the East Coast. In 2005, Dr. Polin moved west to Portland, where he became regional chief of neurosurgery for Northwest Permanente at Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center. In 2012, he opened his private practice, Polin Neurosurgery, in Northeast Portland.

In private practice, Dr. Polin is recognized for his expertise with prevalent and complicated brain and spine conditions. Whether treating cranial tumors, pituitary or skull base pathologies (which he treats with minimally invasive techniques whenever possible), Chiari Malformation, or various conditions of the spine, Dr. Polin is an expert in his field. With a "Best Practice Always" approach, Dr. Polin provides individualized treatments while being mindful of surgery's long-term impacts.

"It is important to balance the appropriate surgery with what is best for patients," he says. "The most conservative treatment germane to the patient's condition should always be considered." For example, when choosing between fusion surgery and disk replacement, Dr. Polin considers the latter whenever possible because it preserves, rather than inhibits, the spine's natural motion.

Dr. Polin has spent decades in the operating room alongside leaders in his field and is a respected member of his profession. In the clinic, he values one skill in particular. "The art of listening is perhaps the most important part of a doctor's practice, and it's not always taught in medical school," he says. "I strive to be that doctor who listens." He meets personally with every patient, shepherding them through every step of their treatment plan. It's a trademark of his practice and something patients notice from their very first visit.



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