

Texas Spine & Scoliosis

MAIN OFFICE: 1004 West 32nd Street, Suite 200 • Austin, TX 78705
Appointments & Referrals: 512-324-3580
Educational online encyclopedia on spine at: [TexasSpineandScoliosis.com](https://www.TexasSpineandScoliosis.com)

An autoimmune joint disease caused arm pain and weakness

Arial had an unusual neck problem that first surfaced with a visit to her dentist for a jaw problem in 2020. He felt something was affecting her jawbone. While she had some back pain off and on since age 19 from scoliosis, now she noticed some other alarming new symptoms. "I noticed my left arm was sore down to my middle fingers," Arial remembers. "My doctor thought it could be serious so I was sent to the emergency room. I had some bloodwork done, and was then referred to a rheumatologist. I was diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis, and the rheumatologist thought the back pain came from that, along with the jaw joint

symptoms. The symptoms were so bad, that when I turned my head, my neck would pop. I began to lose weight."

Arial then was referred to a pain management specialist but that provided no relief. "I had continuing pain down into the left arm," Arial notes. "This doctor referred me to Dr. Truumees at Texas Spine & Scoliosis. He reviewed all my diagnostic studies and concluded that I would need a fusion in my neck at C1-2, to stabilize the joint and relieve the symptoms. Dr. Truumees explained that I had an autoimmune disease, Ankylosing Spondylitis, and it was attacking my joints. While there was no cure to the autoimmune disease, he could address the symptoms.

"Dr. Truumees asked if I had any questions as he knew I was scared. Ultimately I had the neck surgery in late 2023. Two weeks after surgery, I felt great, the best I'd felt in a long time. I have two

large dogs, and I am now back to their long walks at dawn which they love and are excited about every day. They are my motivation because they love their walks on a trail near my house."

Dr. Truumees notes that Arial's case is rare: "Ankylosing Spondylitis is an inflammatory arthritis, like rheumatoid arthritis, a chronic autoimmune disease that primarily affects the joints, causing inflammation, pain and stiffness. In the spine it can lead to painful destruction of the vertebral joints. In Arial's case, she had extreme pain in the upper cervical spine due to joint destruction. It was necessary to surgically stabilize the joint. Arial's autoimmune disease is rare. But the spine center was able to address it, which exemplifies the wide range of treatment available from the simplest to the most complex, in our multi-disciplinary spine center."



Dr. Truumees performed a one-level cervical fusion to relieve Arial's pain symptoms in her left arm. Explains Dr. Truumees: "Arial's autoimmune disease is rare. But the spine center was able to address it, which exemplifies the wide range of treatment available from the simplest to the most complex, in our multi-disciplinary spine center." Arial is now back to her morning walks with her dog.

