



William D. Tobler, MD
innovator | leader

1985 Dr. William D. Tobler joins the Mayfield Neurological Institute and establishes practice at The Christ Hospital. He earned his medical degree at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine in 1978, completed internships in internal medicine and general surgery at Good Samaritan Hospital, and served a residency in neurosurgery at UC Medical Center and Mayfield starting in 1980.

1985: Dr. Tobler helps develop the Pelorus stereotactic surgical system that used arc-centered ball-and-socket targeting. This technology was launched by Ohio Medical Instrument Co. and eventually is among those licensed to Medtronic Inc., which uses it to manufacture a device that is used worldwide for biopsies and functional stereotactic procedures.

1988 Dr. Tobler helps to establish the Steamboat Springs Neurosurgical Symposium, held in Colorado. The continuing medical education event later moves to Snowmass Village and is rebranded the Winter Clinics for Cranial & Spinal Surgery. It brings together neurosurgeons and researchers from around the world for leading-edge educational programming, co-sponsored by institutions including Cleveland Clinic and Mayo Clinic, jointly provided by the American Association of Neurological Surgery.

1996 Dr. Tobler leads development of the Mayfield ACCISS Image-Guided System, a global positioning system for the human body that allows neurosurgeons to eradicate or remove brain tumors with utmost accuracy.

1998 Collaborating with scientists from the Charité Hospital in Berlin, Dr. Tobler develops the first direct current electro-magnetic tracking device for image-guided surgery.

1999 Dr. Tobler is instrumental in launching the Mayfield MobileSCAN CT. He is the first surgeon to join intra-operative CT with image guidance using specialized tables and headrests, technology now used worldwide.

2002 Dr. Tobler becomes Chair of Neurosurgery at The Christ Hospital after the retirement of Dr. Stewart Dunsker.

2005 Dr. Tobler becomes the first surgeon in Cincinnati and among the first in the world to perform an axial lumbar interbody fusion (AxiaLIF), a minimally invasive technique to access the lumbar spine. It is designed to fixate the lower spine in patients who suffer from spinal stenosis, spondylolisthesis or degenerative disc disease.

2007 The Mayfield Spine Surgery Center opens along Interstate 71 in Norwood. It is among the first freestanding centers, both in the region and nationally, for patients needing outpatient spine surgery. Dr. Tobler served as its first medical director and as chairman of the Board of Managers from 2010-2020.

2008 Dr. Tobler assumes the role of board chair at the Mayfield Education & Research Foundation.

2016 The Mayfield Surgical Innovation Center opens on the second floor of the Spine Surgery Center. Dr. Tobler spearheaded the cadaveric training lab and conference center that provides education and training for physicians, residents and technology partners.

2016 Dr. Tobler performs the first sacroiliac joint (SI) fusion at an outpatient spine surgery center using the RIALTO system with O-arm and StealthStation technology for 3-D navigation.

2017 Dr. Tobler performs Greater Cincinnati's first Coflex Interlaminar Stabilization procedure in an outpatient setting. Designed for spinal stenosis patients, the procedure is a non-fusion option to stabilize the spine after decompression.

2024 Under Dr. Tobler's leadership, the Mayfield Foundation launches the David & Wendy Herche Lectureship to promote innovation in spine surgery. David Herche supported the new program after surgery with Dr. Tobler to remove a spinal tumor.