

Minimally Invasive Surgery of the Knee

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Osteoarthritis affects more than 21 million individuals in the United States. Degenerative joint disease or osteoarthritis is one of the oldest and most common forms of arthritis. The disease causes the normal smooth cartilage of the joint to breakdown, causing pain and discomfort. This arthritis process results in bone against bone friction and pain associated with swelling, discomfort, loss of movement and loss of mobility. Osteoarthritis usually affects the weight bearing sections of the knee, which include the junction of the lower leg bone (the tibia) with the upper leg bone (the femur) and beneath the kneecap (the patella.) Disease may affect one section of the knee (medial or inside) leaving the other two sections relatively healthy (outside or lateral and kneecap), or it may affect two or three of the sections of the knee.

Symptoms include joint pain and often pain or discomfort at night with some eventual loss of motion. There are several options for treatment of arthritis and as you know, several promises and cures and remedies have been explored throughout the years. Unfortunately, these palliative treatments can help assist with some pain, swelling and keep people going, but ultimately when the pain and arthritis get so severe, surgery is needed.

Conservative measures include icing, exercising, range of motion, physical therapy, and weight management to relieve stress on the weight bearing joints, as well as anti-inflammatory medication (Motrin, Naprosyn, Celebrex), or cortisone injections or Synvisc injections. Ultimately if the arthritis progresses to the point where it causes pain or limitation of motion and restriction of your normal lifestyle, then surgical treatment is needed. Surgical treatment for knee replacement has normally been a complete total knee replacement, replacing all three of the surfaces of the knee using metal and plastic materials to resurface the ends of the bone. Our newer, minimally invasive solution (MIS) incision is designed to allow shorter hospital stays minimal blood loss and quicker rehabilitation secondary to the smaller incision.

Based on the examination with your surgeon and after obtaining a x-ray, it will be decided whether or not you are a candidate for knee replacement. Partial knee replacement is a more conservative alternative if indeed your arthritis is limited to one compartment of the knee joint. If indeed you are a candidate for the procedure, typically the MIS procedure is a treatment option for approximately 10 to 20% of patients who are suffering from knee arthritis. Using the new specialized instrumentation, we are able to perform a minimally invasive procedure through a 3-inch incision as opposed to an 8 or 12-inch incision required for traditional knee replacement surgery. We only remove the diseased portion of the knee and cement in implants of the prosthesis, while leaving the healthy portions of the knee untouched. This procedure usually requires half the rehabilitation time or hospital stay, minimal blood

loss and quicker rehabilitation. We also feel that the patients will experience quicker return of normal range of motion and recovery after a successful unicompartmental knee replacement is performed. Partial knee replacements are designed to last approximately ten years.

Often younger people are candidates for this procedure, based on the fact that they are too young to receive a total knee replacement. This is a very excellent procedure to be able to, what we call, buy time and allow for a functioning lifestyle until traditional knee replacement can be utilized. Partial knee replacements are used for people who have osteoarthritis limited to one compartment and/or people who develop osteonecrosis, which is a loss of bone cartilage secondary to a problem with the blood supply to the bone, but is not utilized for patients who are suffering from rheumatoid arthritis. This procedure can also be done on the kneecap or patellofemoral joint.

In summary, the results of this procedure are very successful and do allow quick rehabilitation and improvement with a good long-term pain relief, accomplishing a 95 to 98% pain relief satisfaction score. Again, the limited knee surgery hurts less, allows less time in the hospital, and allows a more normal range of motion and functioning knee. If you have any further questions, there is other information available on the Internet, including information available at www.pacewithlife.com.