

Orthopaedic Connection

Knee Arthritis in Women

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I said last week that there are several more aspects about knee arthritis and total knee replacement that we need to cover. It is a multifaceted subject that I feel deserves as much of our time that is needed to cover it thoroughly. I hope you will agree that it makes sense to cover the subject thoroughly at this time and then go on to a different area.

There are certain aspects of knee arthritis and surgery in women that are distinctly different from men. I am not talking about women needing their own gender specific replacement. I covered that two weeks ago pointing out that I feel the differences in knee anatomy between men and women is slight.

Women do not require their own special knee replacement. That is an interesting marketing angle directed towards getting women to ask for that company's special women's knee prosthesis. I hope I have made my point.

We do however see a lot more women with knee arthritis than men. It is not clear to me why that is, but it is definitely true. It may vary a little among Orthopaedic practices, but I think the numbers are real. Increased sports participation by women is unquestioned, but if sports injuries were causing it you would think it would be equal. But it is not. I doubt that women enjoy being ahead of men in this area.

Why women wait

Women experience the same onset of knee pain that men do. It causes women to give up doing things that they like. It usually happens slowly over years and daily pain and gradual restriction of activities are accepted as a matter of course. No matter what the person's age they usually refer to this as "old age setting in".

It is well known that women wait a lot longer than men to find out what is going on and what can be done.

The chief reasons I have discovered that women delay treatment, especially total knee replacement are:

- That the recovery period will prevent them from caring for their loved ones.

- That the recovery may impact their family life.
- Women are more concerned about the procedure than men and want more information so they can make an informed decision.

I have tried very hard to have information available in printed form from my website www.orthopodsurgeon.com to hand out in the office to fill this need. It is one of the most important things we do in the office setting; to inform and educate our patients about their diagnosis and treatment. It takes time, but it is well worth the time. I firmly believe "an educated patient is our best result".

Whether you want to lift your children or grandchildren, do yoga for relaxation and health or spend time in your garden, it is important to talk about what you want to do after knee replacement. Having an open dialog is very important in helping you achieve your best result. Spending the time to answer questions and providing printed information that the woman can take with her has always worked well in our office. It will never change.

Of course there is always the website itself where patients and families can have all of their Orthopaedic Surgery questions answered. www.orthopodsurgeon.com /Your Orthopaedic Connection. More next week about knee arthritis.

Until then---

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush