

Orthopaedic Connection

What Happens After Knee Replacement

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Last week I discussed what I know is the best total knee prosthesis for the majority of my patients. It is the LCS total knee prosthesis made in the USA by DePuy Orthopaedics, Inc. It is unique because of its design and exceptionally long life: twenty years and counting!

After surgery most patients are spending an average of three days in the hospital. The Joint Camp program we use at Gratiot Medical Center makes the entire experience smoother and less scary. I have said many times in talks I have given and in writing, that "*an informed patient is our best outcome*".

Home or Rehab Center

"Home sweet home." For many patients that is where they go when they leave the hospital. If the patient has enough good help at home, it can work well - with the aid of Home Care Nursing and Physical Therapy coming to the house.

Many of our patients know in advance that it would not work for them to go straight home. This has been identified before surgery and a Rehab place has been chosen where the patient can go for a variable amount of time for further recovery.

The Big Three

Bend the knee
Straighten the knee
Strengthen the leg

It's easy to say, but very hard to do. It takes lots of work on your part, the Physical Therapist and your family if you have gone right home. It can be a real struggle. Why is this if the patient has a new knee joint?

***Key point** - only the joint surface is replaced. Your weak muscles and very bad, stiff tissue structures around the knee are still there and even somewhat more ouchy because of the surgery. So the knee starts out in this huge hole! The worse off the knee was before surgery, the longer it takes to get better after surgery. It is different in different people so please don't compare rates of recovery. Same operation, but after that it's apples and oranges.

Activities

Patients are always interested in what they can do with a new knee joint. A very pertinent question I would say. I don't have space left this week to go into all the activities.

Not to accentuate the negative, but I'm going to list first the activities not recommended. Then next time we'll go into all the other activities.

Not Recommended

- Running or jogging
- Singles tennis
- Volley ball
- Basketball
- Football
- Hockey
- Gymnastics
- Soccer
- Racquetball

Too great a chance of injury. Too much stress on the parts. Why take a chance? You don't make a living doing those things. Take it easy.

Next time we will cover all the positive things you will be permitted to do after total knee replacement. These may surprise you.

Office Website and Gratiot County Herald Archive

www.orthopodsurgeon.com and Your Orthopaedic Connection provide all the Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal information you need! And you can reach the archive of all Gratiot County Herald previous articles which I have written through the office website.

All past articles are listed by title and the complete text is available at the click of a mouse.

All of the information available concerns what I treat daily in the office and hospital. Please log on and check it out.

I very much appreciate all of you loyal readers, patients and future patients.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives. I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush