

Orthopaedic Connection

Surgical Treatment of Knee Pain

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Last week when we were covering the non surgical treatment of knee pain I mentioned that surgical treatment options were coming. And here they are!

When?

The best approach is to give the patient the options and let them decide when to do the surgery. No one should be "sold" or talked into surgery of the knee.

Surgery is an appropriate alternative when the conservative treatment no longer provides relief. For some patients the decision to go forward with surgery is extremely difficult.

What?

The procedure recommended depends on many factors including the type of arthritis, how far advanced it is. Also considered is the activity level a person wants to attain afterwards.

- **Osteotomy**

If you have arthritis damage in just one area of your knee a wedge of bone can be removed or added to realign the joint and help shift body weight off the damaged portion of the joint. The procedure has been around for years, but is used less because we have total knee replacement. It is a good operation for younger patients or someone who is very active. There are no limitations on activity afterwards which is a plus.

- **Arthroscopic Surgery**

It is useful in the treatment of arthritis if the patient also has some torn cartilage or a loose piece of bone in the joint. It is not useful in patients whose knee is too arthritic and has hardly any joint space left. It can help a lot, but does not of course cure the arthritis. The procedure is always done as outpatient surgery and the recovery time is much less than any of the other procedures.

- **Partial Knee Replacement**

There are types of knee replacement which replace only a portion of the joint usually on the medial (inner) side or on occasion under the knee cap. The thinking is if only a portion of the joint is bad why replace the whole thing. The other side of the "coin" is if the knee continues to wear out you will need to have a second more major surgery. It gets sort of complicated, but it's not your problem to figure this out. Just know that there is something more conservative than a total replacement that can sometimes be done.

- **Total Knee Replacement**

It is the tried and true procedure that has been around for a very long time. I find that a procedure called the LCS Total Knee is the best one for most of my patients. It consists of removing the surface of both sides of the knee as well as the under surface of the knee cap and inserting a proper size prosthesis that works like your natural knee.

Nowadays, most patients leave the hospital in 3 days to go home or to a rehab place for a short time. It takes at least 6 weeks and often much longer to fully recover. In the end it is worth it because you have a stable knee with much less pain than before surgery and it has a 95% chance of lasting longer than you do!

That should give you, I hope, a good overview of what I can offer patients who need surgery for their arthritis of the knee.

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You get the Office Website and Library, Your Orthopaedic Connection and GCH archive of every article I have written for you.

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

Dr. Haverbush