

## *Orthopaedic Connection*

### **No One Knows Your Body Like You Do**

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#### *Transforming patient information into patient understanding.*

Why would I write something that seems so obvious? Well, I have a good reason which I will explain.

While human anatomy and physiology are fairly predictable, there are differences that occur. This is especially true in physiology which concerns how our bodies work.

#### **Different Physiology**

An example of this is giving 2 similar patients medication for some condition. One does beautifully and the other gets a headache, throws up, gets a rash – in short, has a terrible time. Why, no one knows.

The same is true of the more normal things that happen to our bodies as time passes. Each of us is unique. You get to know what is “normal” or average for you.

#### **Medical History**

The most important thing I do in trying to figure out what’s wrong with someone is taking a history. It’s almost the first thing a student learns in medical school. If you ask the right questions, the patient often in a real sense “tells you the diagnosis”.

You have to give me the best information about how you feel so I can put it together to help you. If you forget or hide things, it makes my job lots harder. Be clear. Don’t go on and on about your history because the doctor (me) goes on overload of information and that makes diagnosis hard too.

Of course, then follows a careful exam and maybe lab tests and often x-rays.

But the basis of everything is what you tell me, separating new symptoms from what you know is normal for your body.

#### **New Thinking**

Lots of patients think the doctor is supposed to “know what’s wrong” with them. What you tell me is the most important in most cases.

An example. A lady falls and breaks her hip. But she tells me she didn’t trip or pass out. She just got up and it happened. I still have to operate on the hip, but there are many possible underlying causes that have to be checked out and also treated.

#### **Worth Gold**

So, you know how your body works and feels on average. I don’t know that. You know it better than I ever will.

A clear (hopefully not too wordy!), medical history is like finding a gold nugget when I am seeing a patient new to me.

Family doctors in a sense have it easier as they get to know their patients and see them over years.

In specialty practice like Orthopaedic Surgery I am constantly seeing new patients in the office and hospital that I will hopefully help and then they go on, so I usually don’t have the time line family doctors do.

#### **Patients Are Unique. Diagnosis Is Hard**

Everyone is unique in the way their body works and what their aches and pains are. I have to constantly remember this when trying to make a diagnosis.

Medical (Orthopaedic) diagnosis is often not straight forward and can be a mystery. But I have to keep looking and thinking, because if the correct diagnosis is not made whatever treatment is prescribed probably won't work.

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