

Orthopaedic Connection

Orthopaedic Braces, “Ugh, Yuck!”

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Talking about orthopaedic braces is not something most of my patients want to hear about. It is a turn off for sure. Sort of like telling a teenager they need orthopaedic shoes! Then why write about it?

Well, if my goal is “To help our patients return to more pain free, functional lives”, a brace can often do that.

Even if you don't need one it is pretty important information to know about and you may be able to give someone else good advice.

So here goes!

Orthopaedics and braces grew up together because 150 years ago that's about all there was!

Many Types

- A brace can be soft, semi-rigid or rigid
- Worn temporarily to stabilize a joint
- Pre-made of neoprene material and plastic
- Custom or over the counter
- Wide range of styles and sizes
- Many kinds of material with Velcro straps

Why Wear It?

- Relieve pain by compressing muscles and ligaments around a joint
- Restrict range of motion usually
- Allow the patient wearing it to be more functional
- So they do have a place if they relieve pain and improve function

Pre-Made or Custom

I can often fit a brace to a patient in the office for certain problems. There are also brace shops near by where the orthotist (brace shop person) needs to fit a certain premade brace to the patient.

Then there are also custom made braces for all kinds of problems that a brace maker or occupational therapist needs to make from scratch.

The custom braces are prescribed if you have incurred serious damage and will need to wear it for an extended period of time.

Kinds Of Braces

- Knee – long straight, brace with hinges, elastic only
- Shoulder – many types that usually limit any use of the arm
- Ankle – some as rigid as a cast to others that allow sports participation
- Elbow, Wrist – what kind depends on the problem
- Hip – for babies to the elderly with a dislocated total hip
- Spine – often used for fractures or in bracing for scoliosis

Next week I can finish this by going into detail about how and why the different kinds of braces are used.

See you next week.

See you are learning something after all!

Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website

I hope what you have read has raised questions. No problem!

Please log onto www.orthopodsurgeon.com. It has a huge amount of musculoskeletal information in the Website and the Archive of all previous GCH articles.

Check it out and be amazed what you can learn.

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

Dr. Haverbush