

Senior Gratiot Orthopaedic Connection

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.

KNEE TROUBLE DOESN'T ALWAYS NEED SURGERY

Sometimes patients have told me they were afraid to see a doctor for their knee. They said surgery seems to be suggested for most problems nowadays and they didn't know if it was bad enough for surgery. So they avoided coming in. I find that sad, but true at this time unfortunately. Advances in technology have seemed to make surgery the first and only answer. The patient is given no choice, basically.

I was trained to consider all options, explain these to the patient and give them choices.

The knee is a perfect example.

As in all cases treatment should be based on a careful history and examination as well as plain x-rays and sometimes special x-ray procedures.

We don't intend in this article to go into all the reasons why knees hurt, but rather make you aware that there are many types of non-operative treatments.

It has been shown often that losing as little as 10 lbs. can reduce stress on the knee enough to decrease pain greatly. I know losing 10 lbs. isn't easy, but it is certainly easier than having surgery, crutches, rehab etc.

Tylenol and Advil or Aleve are always good choices on a temporary basis to see if the problem will subside. This should be combined with avoiding any activities that seem to aggravate the knee pain.

You could obtain a simple knee sleeve either pull on or wrap around.

Application of heat for 15 minutes followed by ice for 15 minutes is a very effective treatment. And there is always BenGay, Theragesic or similar preparation to supplement heat and ice.

If these measures don't work and I end up looking at your knee I promise there will be some choices!

Depending on the problem of course if you have tried all the other things listed I might suggest a prescription medication, physical therapy or possibly some type of injection.

Surgery of course is always the last resort.

A note about medication. Did you know that drug companies spent 4.2 billion dollars a year in direct consumer advertising trying to convince you to ask me to prescribe their drug! The newest drug is not always the best for your problem.

More next time on some of the causes of knee pain.

Dr. Haverbush would be happy to evaluate and treat knee problems or any other orthopaedic condition.

Call the office at 315 Warwick Dr., Alma any weekday 8 - 5 pm. 989-463-6092.

Be well.