

Knee Pain: Non-Surgery Options

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

As an Orthopaedic Surgeon it would be wrong for me to present surgery as the only way to treat bad knees. Unfortunately some do that. I can't help what others do, but I can be honest and correct in what I tell you.

Do I perform a lot of knee surgery? Yes, when it is needed.

Well then what else is on the menu as I like to say to patients regarding their treatment options.

- **Shed pounds**

Wait, don't stop reading and roll your eyes thinking I knew he was going to say that. I do realize how hard it is to lose weight. But, we're not talking about huge amounts of weight. Please at least read the rest of the next paragraph!

Key point - Lose 10 pounds and it relieves 40 pounds of pressure on the knees. Proven over and over biomechanically. Losing 15 pounds can reduce your knee pain by half. Many patients who had been planning surgery didn't have it after losing 10 - 15 pounds. Don't get discouraged. You can do it and your knees will thank you.

- **Get Moving or Keep Moving**

The right kind of activity will not make your knee arthritis worse. Walking, riding a bike and swimming reduce stiffness and improve strength and flexibility. In arthritis it is important to maintain or increase strength and range of motion. If you don't do something you definitely will lose strength and become more stiff. Take Advil (or similar) if you need to and get going.

- **A cane**

It is the knee arthritis patient's friend. Don't be too proud. It can do wonders. Get one and keep walking. Do it for you not me.

- **Physical Therapy**

Maybe. It has to be prescribed of course. You can't walk into the Wellness Center and say you want some "therapy". It can help some patients and I do prescribe it based on physical exam and x-rays. PT always includes a lot of homework that the therapist gives you. So in time you are finished with therapy and doing all of the program at home.

- **Viscosupplementation**

A technical word that means injecting a pain relieving substance into the knee in a series of 5 shots to relieve pain and stiffness. One called Supartz has worked the best for me in properly selected patients.

- **Cortisone like shot**

Cortisone, the grandfather got a bad name because it was over used. The more modern, refined steroid preparations (I use Celestone) can be very effective if used carefully and not too often.

- **Tylenol**

Only for the pain. It has no anti-inflammatory effect.

- **Advil, Motrin, Aleve, Naproxen**

Maybe a better choice for a lot of patients since you get pain relief and some anti-inflammatory effect.

- **Conclusion**

We're not through the menu yet, but we are out of space. If you will promise to come back next week I will tell you of more non-surgery options. See you then.

All Orthopaedic Surgery problems including knee arthritis can be evaluated by Dr. Haverbush at the Lakeview Community Wellness Center in Lakeview or at the office in Alma at 315 Warwick Dr., Alma, Michigan.

Please call 989-463-6092 for information or to schedule an appointment.

Future Lakeview Community Wellness Center Clinic dates are Friday May 29, Friday June 5 and Thursday June 18, 2009.

Please don't forget there is a wealth of accurate information about all the Orthopaedic conditions I treat on the office teaching website www.orthopodsurgeon.com. Please log on and check it out.

We are happy to answer questions from readers. You can e-mail me at orthopodsurgeon@hotmail.com or write to me at 315 Warwick Dr., Alma, Michigan 48801.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free functional lives.

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

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush