

Lakeview Community Wellness Center Orthopaedic Connection

Weight Loss Eases Knee Pain

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Knee arthritis is one of the most frequent problems I see in the office every week.

It seems to be almost epidemic and occurs in patients of all ages, both women and men. Sorry ladies, but you seem to have more arthritis than my male patients.

Research

You hear almost daily that a certain medical study said this or that. And sometimes it conflicts with another study done earlier. So what's the point?

There is one area of medical research that has produced consistent findings for the past 20 years.

Weight loss lessens the force placed on knee joints and reduces the pain of knee arthritis. This evidence started pouring in during the 1980's and has continued. It comes from carefully controlled clinical studies done by professionals at universities.

- Patients losing 10 pounds reduce compressive loads on the knee(s) by a huge amount.
- Fifteen pounds makes an even larger difference.
- The relief of stress on the knee begins and increases with each pound you lose.
- Function (ability to do stuff) increases as pain is lessening thereby giving a double benefit.
- Walking, your best exercise will be more comfortable and may enable you to lose more weight.

Weight Loss Alternatives

- Pain medication
- Anti-inflammatory medications
- Injections of cortisone type medication
- Series of 5 lubrication injections (Supartz)
- Physical Therapy
- Bracing

How do all of these sound to you? I use them all the time and mostly they help.

Keep It Simple

If you want to do one thing that will help even more than any of the things listed above; something almost guaranteed to work – try losing 10 pounds if you can. Even more is better.

Personal Friend

I have a personal friend who has bad arthritis in both knees. Arthroscopic surgery: no help. Medication: no help. Shots in knees: no help.

He knew his only alternative was total knee replacements.

Grasping at straws he tried to lose weight, and did. Guess what? He is so much better he would not even consider total knee replacements now.

Simply amazing.

A Plan

I am an Orthopaedic Surgeon. If you are seriously going to go the weight loss route you need someone like a nutritionist to help with the diet and weight loss part.

A physical therapist could be a huge help in designing an exercise program of walking and some other activities to help you.

The evidence is overwhelming. All you need to do is make up your mind, get some advice and you will be in a large group whose knees feel and function better.

Please remember that anyone can make an appointment to see Dr. Haverbush at his office in Alma, at 315 Warwick Dr., across from Gratiot Medical Center. Call 989-463-6092 to make an appointment.

And don't forget every article I have written for Lakeview Area News is on my Website, www.orthopodsurgeon.com. Check it out. I specialize in you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush