



Still Going STRONG:

Hip & Knee Replacements Can Help You Enjoy Life

People are living longer, more active lives. In fact, life expectancy is higher than ever before in this country. An entire generation of Baby Boomers is transforming society's perception of "The Golden Years" from sedate and tranquil to active and downright fun.

You could say that as life expectancy is on the rise, so are life expectations.

"People are opting for hip or knee replacements much younger than in the past," confirmed **David Wolff, MD, Board Certified Orthopedic Surgeon at Dean Health System.** "At the same time, we as surgeons now have the technology to provide better options."

More Common than Ever

According to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, approximately 500,000 knee replacements and more than 200,000 hip replacements are performed annually, and those numbers continue to rise. Dean and St. Mary's Hospital perform more hip and knee replacements than anyone else in the area.

"The most common joint replacement surgery is knee replacements," says Dr. Wolff. "Hip replacements are second. Shoulders come in a distant third."

Generally speaking, people need one of these procedures because their joint has just "worn out."

"That's the laymen's term for arthritis," Dr. Wolff explains. "Eighty-five out of 100 people I see for a hip or knee replacement have osteoarthritis."

Osteoarthritis is mainly caused by an injury, genetics, or simple wear-and-tear on the body. Dr. Wolff warns that being overweight can cause or exacerbate any of these other underlying problems.

"The more weight on your joints, the more likely they are to wear out," he says.

Each surgery has its own specific procedures, but essentially the worn surfaces of the joint are measured, removed, and replaced with either metal on high-tech plastic synthetic joints or metal on metal. Ceramic bearings may also be used. This allows for better movement in the joint, as well as removes the pain of bone rubbing against bone since the cartilage has long-since been rubbed away.

Better than Ever

"The biggest advances in the last decade or so have had to do with the bearing surfaces (the materials used to make the synthetic joints)," shares Dr. Wolff. They last much longer and wear much better. There is a reduced chance of dislocation. And they provide a better range of motion.

In addition to better materials, surgeons are now able to use smaller incisions, allowing for quicker recovery and shorter hospital stays. Even comfort has not been overlooked. Nerve blocks may be given in addition to or instead of other anesthesia to help you feel more comfortable in those first few days after the procedure.

The Waiting Game

In the past, it was common – and even encouraged – to wait as long as possible before considering a joint replacement surgery. Now, however, the high-tech advances in materials and procedures allow initial replacements to last longer, as well as open up possibilities for additional replacements (called revisions) down the road. Dr. Wolff says opting for surgery sooner or later doesn't really affect the outcome as much as making sure the patient is truly ready. Pain isn't the only indicator.

Surgery might be the answer if:

- **Your pain has started disturbing your sleep.**
- **You can't exercise or keep the rest of your body healthy, thus impacting your overall health.**
- **You are missing out on work or other important life activities because of your pain or disability (immobility).**
- **You are healthy enough to experience the benefits of the surgery.**

"While you can't have a surgical complication if you don't have surgery," Dr. Wolff reasons, "there's a very high chance you'll be satisfied with the outcome."

Between 95 and 99 percent of hip and knee replacement patients report they are satisfied with the results. For so many people, it's about more than pain relief. It's about getting back to the things in life they love to do.

Dr. Wolff agrees. "I can't believe how many patients say 'thanks for giving me my life back!' It feels good to help them."

For more information on **hip or knee replacements**, or to learn more about **Dean's orthopedic surgeons:** www.deancare.com.



Dean Health System is excited about improving our services for you. You will notice some changes to our automated phone system at Dean:

- Some department phone numbers will change.
- Calls will initially be answered by an auto-attendant which will provide options.
- Your call will be routed to the appropriate staff member who is prepared to help you with your specific request.

This new system will connect patients with appropriate staff in a more timely manner, decreasing waiting times and the need to be transferred. If you would like to provide feedback about our new phone system please call **(608) 294-6200**. We look forward to receiving your comments.



WE WILL NOT SCHEDULE REGULAR APPOINTMENTS ON THESE DAYS:

Independence Day - Friday, July 4th
Labor Day - Monday, September 1st

All clinic services will be closed on these days except:

East and West Clinic Urgent Care:

Open 7 am - 4 pm

East and West Clinic Pharmacy:

Open 8:30 am - 4 pm

(all other pharmacy locations will be closed)