

Alternatives to Knee Replacement

With Orthopaedic Surgeon
Dr. Michael Samuelson



“You’re going to need a knee replacement!” That’s what people hear their friends say when they have severe and ongoing knee pain from an injury or arthritis. According to orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Michael Samuelson this is not always the case. When this fear keeps someone away from the doctor it can only lead to a bigger problem later on.

There are many other options to a total knee replacement and all of them are considered and exhausted

“Each case is different and depending on the age category, lifestyle and type of injury we will always look at the other options first, reserving total knee replacement as the last course of action,” says Dr. Samuelson. The most important thing is get in and get a proper diagnosis to determine the best course of action right away.

Arthritis is something we hear a great deal about but what is it really? According to Dr. Samuelson, arthritis is a wearing down in the amount of cartilage in joints. The cartilage acts as a cushion between the bones of a joint. Years of stress, genetics or injury can cause a reduction of the cartilage. If left untreated, this eroding of the cartilage may result in bone rubbing on bone which can cause severe pain.

The following are a few of the common alternatives to knee replacement: As simple as it sounds, weight loss can be the cure for a painful knee joint. Even five pounds can sometimes give a dramatic reduction in the amount of pain experienced.

Visco-supplementation is a series of three injections that acts as a lubricant between the joints and has been very effective in

relieving the pain for up to one year for each series of injections. These shots can be administered on a long term basis.

Osteochondral transfers are an option when the reduced cartilage is isolated to a small area. This is a surgical procedure where a small plug of cartilage is taken from a non weight bearing area of the knee and grafted to the painful area that is missing cartilage.

When an area of exposed bone is too big for an osteochondral transfer, cartilage can be removed and grown in a petri dish under sterile conditions and then grafted onto the area that is affected.

There are many other options to a total knee replacement and all of them are considered and exhausted before a total knee replacement is chosen. So if you are hearing about total knee replacements before you have been to see a surgeon you may want to reserve your sense of certainty about your fate until after the diagnosis. Living with pain is a painful way to live. There are lots of options to consider, it’s quite possible that your friends may have left one out.

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