



MUSCULOSKELETAL HEALTH NEWS

Is it Time for Joint Replacement Surgery?



When an arthritis patient asks if it's time for a joint replacement, our usual reply is, "What do you think?" We're not being dismissive. The fact is that it's the patient who will best know when the time has come. It's really a quality-of-life issue, and the only person who can make that call is the patient.

Once the decision is made, that patient is in good hands. OSMC is the premier joint replacement practice in the region, and over the years OSMC surgeons have helped countless Michiana residents get back in the game with a new hip, knee, or shoulder.

Dramatic advances have been made in recent years in the technology of joint replacement surgery, making it much more common and more effective than in years past. A few years ago, doctors might discourage a younger patient from joint replacement because of concern the device would wear out too soon. Today, thanks to improvements in the material and design, that concern is a thing of the past. A good example: the advanced polyethylene plastic used in some devices is actually impregnated with Vitamin E, significantly extending the life of the device. Another example is the use of MRI technology to capture a three-dimensional image of the joint prior to the operation.

Because each individual's anatomy is different, this allows the creation of a customized device that will be used in the surgery to precisely position the implant, making it exactly the right fit for that patient. And new techniques in the surgical procedure itself have contributed to more successful outcomes. For instance, Autologous Platelets – the part of the patient's blood that contains growth factors – can be collected prior to surgery. Near the end of the operation, the platelets are sprayed onto the wound resulting in a highly accelerated healing process.