



MUSCULOSKELETAL HEALTH NEWS

Bad knee?

A *Partial Replacement* may be the *Total Solution.*

The knee is one of the hardest working parts of the body. Consider this: when you go up a set of stairs, the weight-bearing surface of the knee is carrying the equivalent of four times your body weight. With that kind of everyday stress, it's no wonder so many of us develop knee problems, particularly as we get older.

The most common cause of such problems is osteoarthritis, a condition that attacks the natural cushioning qualities of the joint and creates painful bone-on-bone friction. When that pain gets unbearable, surgery to replace your worn out knee is often the recommended solution. But with many people who suffer from severe knee pain, there's no need to replace the entire joint. Instead, a partial knee procedure can provide a total remedy.

Though we generally think of the knee as a single joint, it's actually made up of three distinct parts or compartments. And because many of us, particularly men, are naturally slightly bowlegged, the medial (inside) compartment is the part that gets the most wear and tear.

The other two parts – the outside lateral compartment and the patella (kneecap) – may be fine and have miles of good life left. In these cases, the partial knee procedure allows the surgeon to replace only the damaged part of the knee with manmade material, leaving the healthy cartilage and bone in the rest of the knee untouched.



The procedure may be done on an in-patient or outpatient basis, depending on the patient's overall health. The advantages of this partial knee approach are significant: there's less blood loss and less post-op pain, the rehabilitation is much faster – about half the time required by a patient with total knee replacement. And when it's an outpatient procedure most patients go home a couple of hours after surgery.

It's important to note that this procedure isn't for everyone. It's appropriate only when the surgeon is confident that the rest of the knee is in good shape and ready to stand up to many more years of hard work. But when that is the case a partial knee is a great option. Because the bone, cartilage, and ligaments in the healthy parts of the knee are preserved, patients can expect the "new" knee to feel more natural and perform at an even higher level of function than would be the case with a total joint replacement.

For more information on the partial knee procedure or to arrange a consultation with one of OSMC's joint replacement specialists, please call 574-264-0791.