

Knee Research: Osteoarthritis

A New Treatment For Those Suffering from Osteoarthritis of the Knee

It's a fact. The longer a person lives and the more active he or she is throughout their life, the greater chance that person will experience osteoarthritis. For many seniors, osteoarthritis of the knees is an everyday, painful experience. Each year, more than 6 million people see an orthopedic surgeon for treatment of a knee problem.

Osteoarthritis is a part of the normal aging process where the cartilage of joints begins to wear down. The roughened cartilage surfaces grind against each other, causing pain, swelling and stiffness. Eventually, the cartilage surfaces will completely wear away, until bone is exposed. Complete knee replacement surgery may be recommended to some patients by their physicians.

An advanced procedure, however, is now available that can help early-stage, osteoarthritis sufferers. Called "The Unispacer Knee System," this procedure was developed for patients who exhausted traditional treatments for knee pain like drugs and arthroscopic surgery and as an alternative to knee replacement.

According to Dr. Antoine Roberts, a Centinela Hospital Medical Center orthopedic surgeon who is one of the first physicians in Southern California to perform this surgery, "The Unispacer Knee System can offer new hope to those suffering from the pain of early-stage osteoarthritis of the knees."

The Unispacer, itself, is a small, kidney-shaped insert made of cobalt chrome that is surgically placed in the knee joint (as an alternative to the surgeon having to cut the bone and replace the entire knee).

It helps relieve arthritis pain and improve joint stability by adapting to the normal motion of each individual's knee. It moves with the knee, not against it, "Dr. Roberts continued. "The procedure allows me to preserve the patient's bone by replacing only the damaged cartilage and then inserting the Unispacer."

The operation, itself, is usually performed under general or regional anesthesia and generally takes about one hour to perform.

Summarized Dr. Roberts: "With this new procedure, we may be able to extend a patient's active lifestyle by delaying traditional knee replacement, thereby retaining their natural anatomy."