

Living Well Column, Craig Daily Press, Saturday, July 4

# Is it Time for a Hip or Knee Replacement?

Are you starting to get sore in a hip or knee joint after a hike or feeling more and more stiff in the mornings? Is pain in a joint affecting your sleep? Do you feel like old Uncle Charlie who knows the weather is changing because your knee joint aches when it rains? If so, you may eventually need a hip or knee replacement.

“The first signs that a hip or knee joint is wearing out are pain or stiffness. As the cartilage in the joint deteriorates, the symptoms may become more bothersome,” said Dr. Kevin Borchard.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 1 in 2 people may develop painful knee joints by age 85 and 1 in 4 people may develop painful hip arthritis in their lifetime. The rate is higher for people who are obese.

“The most common reason joints wear out is osteoarthritis, with other less common causes being traumatic injuries, rheumatoid arthritis or osteonecrosis,” Borchard said.

Signs that a hip or knee joint is wearing out include aching followed by periods of relief, pain after use, stiffness after rest, disturbed sleep and an increase of discomfort when the weather is humid.

“The cartilage in our joints is like tread on a tire that can wear out over time. Unfortunately, there isn’t a great way to regenerate the cartilage once it wears out. For treatment, we first try non-surgical techniques such as low impact exercises, weight loss, physical therapy, bracing, anti-inflammatory medications and injections,” Borchard stated.

In the past, people relied on canes more frequently, but not as much today since many opt for hip

or knee replacement surgery. Because of their high success rate – 90% who get an artificial joint placed experience improvement – they’ve become popular. While most hip replacements are in patients 60 to 80 years of age, more and more younger people who have worn out their joints through sports or overuse are also opting for replacements. According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, there has been a 188% increase in knee replacements and a 123% increase in hip replacements in people ages 45 to 64 in a recent decade.

“When non-operative solutions stop working and the hip or knee pain begins interfering with your life, the time could be right to consider surgery. Talk to your primary care doctor or request a consultation with an orthopaedic surgeon,” Borchard concluded.

Nearly 95% of hip and knee total joint replacements last 10 years, and 85% last 20 years, according to research published in the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery.

The Memorial Hospital is pleased to bring Dr. Kevin Borchard’s advanced training and skills in orthopaedic surgery to the region. Dr. Borchard is completing a fellowship in advanced total joint replacement methods at the prestigious New England Baptist Hospital in Boston, Mass. TMH and Pioneers Medical Center are teaming up to open the Northwest Colorado Orthopaedic & Total Joint Center at both locations. Dr. Borchard starts taking appointments August 1; call 970.826.2400 for an appointment or visit [www.thememorialhospital.com](http://www.thememorialhospital.com) and select orthopaedics under services for more information.



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