

Orthopaedic Connection

Myth Busters II

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

We have arrived at a point where the knee has been covered thoroughly for now. Time for Myth Busters II!

I don't dream this stuff up, OK? People actually think these things are true and my staff and I have to try to set them straight.

- **M.B.**
Copper bracelets treat arthritis.

Copper bracelets are an over used alternative treatment without scientific merit. Manufacturers claim that tiny amounts of the copper from the bracelets move through your skin and neutralize free radicals that can damage cells in and around the joint. There is no science to support this, but wear them if you like, since there is no physical harm in doing so.

- **M.B.**
Fish oil does not help arthritis.

Fish oil contains anti-oxidants (omega-3 fatty acids). Some studies show it can help prevent osteoarthritis and decrease the pain and swelling of rheumatoid arthritis. It is also good for those with heart disease.

- **M.B.**
Incision size determines how fast you recover.

Whether you will require four, six, eight, twelve weeks or beyond depends on your overall health and fitness prior to any orthopaedic surgery as well as your motivation to stick with rehab afterwards. The less fit you are before surgery, the longer your recovery will take, no matter the size of the incision.

- **M.B.**
The number of joint replacements performed is decreasing.

Ah, just the opposite. Research by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, my specialty organization, shows that knee replacements will increase 500% and hip replacements 200% in the

next 10 - 20 years. Unwelcome news for the headed for bankruptcy Medicare system. On the other hand in case you didn't know, Medicare drastically reduces reimbursement to physicians when procedures increase in volume. Payment to the physician is only about 3 - 4% of the total cost of a total joint replacement!

- **M.B.**
Glucosamine has no side effects.

Most people have no side effects. A few patients have GI discomfort, drowsiness, skin reactions, or headache. If you are allergic to shellfish, avoid it. For diabetics, it can make blood sugar harder to manage. Coumadin and Glucosamine should be avoided due to a slight increase in bleeding.

I hope these MB articles and Frequently Asked Questions are helpful to some of our readers. I do think it has a place along side our regular articles.

For more information check out our office teaching website for patients and families, www.orthopodsurgeon.com, which can take you to Your Orthopaedic Connection.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush