

Lakeview Community Wellness Center Orthopaedic Connection

Frequently Asked Questions About Arthritis II

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Last week I started to answer some of the questions that come to me from patients. I thought it would be a good idea to finish these and go on to a new subject next week. Let the questions begin!

- "I have heard Rheumatoid Arthritis is more common in women. Is it?" Gladys from Carson City.

It is noticeably more common in women, but no one knows why. Peak age of onset in men and women is 30 - 40, which is a lot earlier than the more common osteoarthritis.

- "Is Supartz joint lubrication substance good for all arthritis?" Charles from Sheridan

That's a very good question, Charles. Supartz, which is the pain relieving joint lubrication medication I use is only for degenerative or osteoarthritis. Supartz or any of the others won't help rheumatoid arthritis or any other type of arthritis.

- "I am 53 and my family doctor said I have hip arthritis and need a total hip. How long do they last?" Brian from Lakeview.

Many factors go into how long they last, Brian. The AML total hip prosthesis I use has lasted 20 years in 95% of patients who have it. That is not to say it can't last longer. We've only been tracking it for 20 years so it probably will last indefinitely or as long as you do. Age is not that much of a determining factor anymore.

- "You said you wouldn't do a knee arthroscopy for my arthritis. Why not? It is simpler than a total knee." A.B. from Stanton

Well, A.B. it is simpler and easier on you, but sometimes there is too much arthritis for arthroscopic surgery. It might "help" for a few weeks, then you're back to square one and you had a procedure, anesthesia and didn't really benefit. If a total knee is not an option you would be better off trying Supartz, pain relieving lubrication injections.

- "What is a Lidoderm patch?" Edna from Lakeview.

It is a prescription only patch that contains the local anesthetic, Lidocaine. It is used on the back and around large joints. The patch is large (5x6 inches) so it is not suitable for small joints. My patients sometimes cut it in half to conserve, but you can't make it too small or it won't help. You apply it for twelve hours and then take it off for twelve. Then repeat. It is pretty expensive if you don't have prescription coverage. Always check first.

- "What blood test(s) can be done to tell if I have osteoarthritis?" Eric from Greenville.

There is no established blood test to tell if a person has osteoarthritis. Unfortunately, x-rays don't usually show any changes until it has been present for some time. It is discouraging I know.

I think we have been able to cover several things the last two weeks that people have inquired about.

Thanks for your support at Lakeview Community Wellness Center. I am happy to see all Orthopaedic Surgery problems at LCWC or at the office 315 Warwick Dr., Alma, Michigan. Please call 989-463-6092 to schedule an appointment at either place.

Future LCWC Clinic dates are February 19 and March 5, 2010.

Log on to www.orthopodsurgeon.com, which can take you to Your Orthopaedic Connection for answers to all your questions.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives. I specialize in you.

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

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush