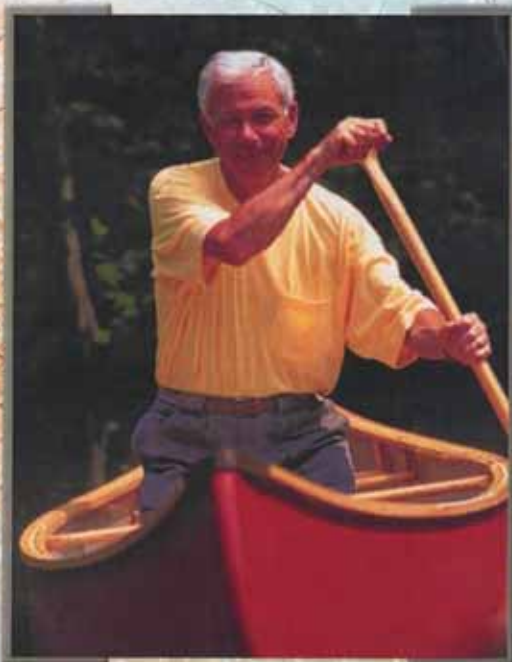


Knee and Hip Pain

Getting a Good Diagnosis



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Excelling in Hip & Knee Replacement
at Battle Creek Health System

Taking the First Step

The first step in getting the right treatment for your hip or knee problem is simple – a good diagnosis from a joint expert. Knee or hip pain can be caused by a number of conditions, some temporary, others chronic but treatable.

A good diagnosis is the key to beginning an effective treatment plan.



Your Role

Your role in getting a good diagnosis is an important one. At your appointment, the orthopedic specialist will take a general medical history and will ask you several questions about your joint pain.

Think about how to describe your pain when answering these questions:

- What are you doing when it hurts the most?
- What seems to help it?
- How long have you had the pain?
- Was there an injury that started the pain?
- Is the pain sharp? Dull? Nagging? Achy?
- Does it travel up and down your leg?
- Does your joint "lock-up" or click?

It is helpful to bring a list of any medications that you are currently taking. Be sure to include the strength and how often you take it.



Also include any over-the-counter medications, nutritional supplements or vitamins you are taking. If you have tried pain medications that didn't help, mention that too.

Signs and Symptoms

Many different knee or hip problems often have the same symptoms. They include:

Heat and swelling

Your brain continuously works to balance the chemicals in your body and when there is damage to any body part, chemicals are released and fluid is sent to cushion and nourish the area – hence the heat and swelling.



Pain

This is another sign that something is not right. This is your body's way of getting your attention,

and it is usually quite effective. Eventually, pain may limit your ability to get around and enjoy favorite activities. If pain prevents you from moving about or exercising, it can lead to weight gain and other health problems.

Immobility

Your joints require motion to maintain function, as a certain amount of weight-bearing stress and movement is needed to nourish cartilage and prevent bone loss. If pain prevents regular movement, the joint can deteriorate to the point of immobility.

Common Causes of Knee and Hip Pain

Heat, pain and swelling in your knee or hip can be caused by several conditions. Below is a list of possible causes.

- Bursitis** This is the inflammation of bursa – fluid filled space keepers – that are located near bony prominences.
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- Synovitis** This is the inflammation of the synovial capsule surrounding the joint. The synovium is normally a thin lining. Certain conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, can cause the synovium to thicken and become engorged with fluid, leading to pain and inflammation.
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- Tendonitis** This is the inflammation of a tendon – the white fibrous tissues – that connect muscle to bone. It is often the result of overuse, such as "tennis elbow." Other common areas where tendonitis occurs are the wrists, shoulders and knees.
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- Torn cartilage** This is often the result of athletic activities, but it can also be caused by a slip or fall. Most often, the meniscus is involved – the tough fibrous cartilage – that cushions the knee.
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- Osteoarthritis** This is the wearing away of the protective cartilage over time. While osteoarthritis can be painful, many people that have osteoarthritis do not experience any pain at all. Osteoarthritis in the hip can be difficult to diagnose early because pain may be felt in the groin, buttock, thigh or even the knee. The pain can vary in quality from a dull ache to a sharp pain. This is why a good diagnosis from a joint expert is so important.

Take Control

Making that appointment today is the first step in taking control of your pain.

Get a good diagnosis so you can get you started on an effective treatment plan. After all, these are the years you worked hard for.

Enjoy them pain free!

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