



Mark A. Hartzband, M.D.

Joint Replacement: Advanced Techniques Bring Better Outcomes

FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS, MARK A. HARTZBAND, M.D., DIRECTOR, BONE AND JOINT CENTER, HOLY NAME MEDICAL CENTER, HAS PROVIDED PATIENTS IN THE TRI-STATE AREA WITH MINIMALLY INVASIVE JOINT REPLACEMENT PROCEDURES THAT ENABLE QUICKER RECOVERY TIMES AND FASTER RETURN TO A FULFILLING QUALITY OF LIFE.

DR. HARTZBAND REFLECTS ON his early orthopedic training, when patients came to the hospital two days prior to a joint replacement procedure to donate two units of blood and were shaved from chest to ankle. Following the procedure, patients often remained in bed for a week, so blood clots were common and serious complications. Minimally invasive techniques have greatly reduced these factors.

“Now, these are 35- to 45-minute operations,” Dr. Hartzband says. “Essentially, all procedures are performed using spinal or epidural anesthetics, and patients choose to be awake or asleep. Reducing the procedure’s duration and using regional anesthesia decreases nausea, the risk for blood clots and the amount of bleeding during the procedure.”

Built to Last

Improved implant materials, such as zirconium-reinforced ceramics and extremely durable metals, have significantly enhanced the durability of joint replacements, extending the replacement’s life from 10 or 15 years to as many as 25, says Dr. Hartzband. He

notes that hip replacement stems and sockets are primarily constructed of titanium and tantalum, with material for the bearing surface dependent on the patient’s age.

Vitamin E-treated polyethylene, which is also available for knee replacement components, has been shown to be ideal for younger patients because of its durability. Patients older than 65 are typically provided with components made with cross-linked polyethylene, which will likely last the rest of these patients’ lives. On the femoral side of the hip, Dr. Hartzband chooses cobalt chrome or zirconium-reinforced ceramic implants to provide a longer-lasting joint.

A Changing Demographic

Proven durability and rapid return to normal activities has changed the demographic of patients seeking joint replacements. What was once a procedure for the elderly has become a sought-after method for preserving younger patients’ quality of life. As Dr. Hartzband explains, it all depends on the individual’s wishes.

“The point at which people consider joint replacement varies,” Dr. Hartzband says. “Some people want this procedure

because they can’t play tennis for an entire hour anymore, whereas other people’s children bring them in wheelchairs to our office. We make sure we don’t fix an X-ray — we fix a person. Some people with horrible-looking X-rays don’t want or need joint replacement because they’re pain-free or functional, while there are those with much lower levels of joint degeneration who do.”

Patient-Guided Recovery

The nature of joint replacement surgery, as performed at Holy Name Medical Center’s Bone and Joint Center, expedites patients through recovery to the resumption of their normal activities.

“Patients can return to just about any activity following a hip or knee replacement,” Dr. Hartzband says. “I’ve had a few patients who are triathletes, and although running for fun is the one thing I still shy away from encouraging, they prove it can be accomplished.”

Notably, some of Dr. Hartzband’s patients whose professions don’t require strenuous physical activities return to work as soon as a week following surgery.

For more information about Holy Name Medical Center’s Bone and Joint Center, please visit www.holyname.org. ■