



Knee problems **more common** among **women** than men

Knee pain can be caused by a number of conditions including arthritis, tendonitis, injury, overuse and being overweight. Women are especially prone to knee cap related discomfort and they are more affected by arthritis of the knee than men are.

Orthopedic surgeon Dr. Bradley Gerber, who practices at South Nassau Hospital and The Orlin & Cohen Orthopedic Group, said “women today are experiencing more activity-related injuries and also developing arthritis at an alarming rate.” Non-surgical relief of knee pain is the first approach, Gerber said. “There are anti-inflammatories, injections, physical therapy. After that, surgery might be an option.”

“Knee surgery,” Gerber said, “for things like ligament injuries and cartilage tears, can be as simple as an arthroscopy, which is two small incisions in the knee done through a camera. It takes about 30 minutes, you’re in and out of the hospital in a few hours and recovery is just a few weeks.” A total knee replacement, he said, might take several hours with a two-day stay in the hospital, and recovery in two or three months. But, Gerber adds, “with modern pain control, recovery is much easier than it was just a few years ago.”

There’s also a new alternative to knee replacement. “Some patients with advanced arthritis may be candidates for a revolutionary new procedure called a subchondroplasty,” said Gerber. “It takes about 40 minutes and you’re in and out the same day. Relief is similar to a knee replacement and the recovery time is several weeks instead of several months.”

Dr. Richard Savino, an orthopedic surgeon at Mather Hos-

pital and Long Island Bone and Joint, said “knee issues are common in women. Their alignment tends to be different from men’s, and that can lead to issues in the way their knee cap tracks.” One common condition is called chondromalacia, or runner’s knee, which causes pain behind or around the kneecap. Savino said there is a procedure tailored to women which replaces the backside of the kneecap.

“Women are also more prone than men to injure their ACL (anterior cruciate ligament), one of the main stabilizing ligaments in the knee,” Savino said. There are new techniques and instrumentation to accurately reconstruct the ACL without drilling through bone. If you need such an operation, he said, “you want an orthopedist who knows the newer techniques.”

Prevention Tips

Dr. Gerber said one of the most important things you can do to reduce stress on the knee is to keep your weight down. Warming up and stretching before exercise is also strongly recommended.

Dr. Savino added that running shoes should be changed every 300 to 500 miles. It’s also important to find out what kind of runner you are, and what part of your foot contacts the ground first, the inside or outside, heels or toes. “You can get running shoes that are specifically designed for that,” he said.

– Greg Burt