SOCH OFFERS *Gender-Specific knee Replacement Surgery*

Knee Replacement Shaped to Fit a Woman's Anatomy

For Alnea Weisbrod, 84, coping with horrible knee pain had become a way of life. A car accident six years ago resulted in a broken leg for the Manahawkin resident. That injury, along with chronic arthritis, forced Alnea to use a walker and at times, a wheelchair, as walking on the knee proved too difficult.

When anti-inflammatory drugs and cortisone injections failed to provide relief, Alnea seriously considered knee replacement surgery.

"My daughter saw an article in a magazine about a new knee replacement surgery made just for women," said Alnea, who approached her orthopedic surgeon, **Dr. Jason Wong** to learn if she would be a good candidate for the procedure. Indeed, she was!

Seven weeks following her surgery, and after completing physical therapy, Alnea, who no longer needs the wheelchair or walker, feels great!

"Men and women are different, from their brain cells to their bones, joints included," said Dr. Wong, who was the first orthopedic surgeon in Monmouth and Ocean Counties to perform the gender-specific knee replacement using the Zimmer Gender Solutions Knee™. This is the first knee replacement designed to fit a woman's anatomy."

According to Dr. Wong, the knee joint is composed of three bones, the end of the femur (thighbone), the top of the tibia, (shinbone) and the patella (kneecap), which are all held together by tendons and ligaments, and are cushioned by cartilage. Knees can become painful, due to arthritis, injury and infection, which cause deterioration of the cartilage. When cartilage is gone, the bones of the knee grind against each other, wearing away and typically causing severe pain. Total knee replacement involves removing the portion of bone that is damaged and resurfacing the knee with metal and plastic implants.

"The bone in front of a woman's knee is typically less prominent than in a man's," explained Dr. Wong. "Traditional implants have a thickness in front that may end up feeling bulky, which may result in pain and a decrease in range of motion. For women, the gender-specific knee has a thinner profile to accommodate this anatomical difference between women and men."

Dr. Wong went on to explain that the angle between the hip and the knee affects how the kneecap moves over the thighbone when the knee is in motion. "Women have a distinct shape which frequently results in a different angle between the hip and the knee when compared to men. This knee accounts for the difference, allowing more natural movement. In addition, this knee has a contoured shape to more closely match the narrower anatomy of a woman's knee. This contouring provides for a more precise fit and may prevent the implant from overhanging the bone and potentially pressing on or damaging surrounding ligaments and tendons."

JoAnne Palmieri, 60, knows first-hand about the benefits of the gender-specific knee. Dr. Wong performed her gender-specific knee surgery after other, less invasive treatments failed to diminish chronic arthritis pain that rendered her unable to work in her job as a nurse.

"Before the surgery I could walk but I had a limp, and I dragged my foot behind me. Also, the arthritis had caused my knee to swell, which caused tremendous pain," said JoAnn, who, five weeks after her surgery and a month of physical therapy, feels like she's getting her life back.

Dr. Wong is excited about this new option for women with chronic knee pain, and he encourages women to learn if they are a candidate for the procedure.

Alnea Weisbrod was the first patient in Monmouth and Ocean Counties to have the gender-specific knee replacement surgery. Dr. Jason Wong, an orthopedic surgeon who performed the procedure at SOCH, is pictured here examining Alnea's knee during a follow-up visit.

For more information about the gender-specific knee replacement, for information on Physical Therapy or for referral to an orthopedic surgeon, call SOCHConnect, at 609-978-3400.