

HealthWatch

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Living Life to the Fullest

How knee replacement surgery can give you back your active lifestyle.

by **KenMcEntee**
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Bonnie Steele was determined to not let her painful, arthritic knees curtail her life.

"I felt like I was getting old before my time," recalls Bonnie, an instructional assistant in the Berea City Schools. "I couldn't see myself sitting on the sidelines for the rest of my life, watching everybody going by and doing things I can't do anymore. I couldn't keep up going to Cedar Point or to the movies. I was really sad thinking about how it was going to be when I had grandkids and I was stuck in a chair."

That's why Bonnie decided to get her life back with a new pair of knees.

Like Bonnie, Eric Parsson refused to let his worn out knees slow him down. His decades of work as a union pipefitter finally took their toll.

"My job involved a lot of heavy work and a lot of climbing," he says. "My knees just wore out. For the past 10 years, I have had very bad arthritis. I could work my shift, but by the end of the day, I was wiped out. I could hardly walk. It got to the point of either doing something about it or sitting in a rocking chair for the rest of my life. So I decided that I was going to have my knees replaced."

Both Bonnie and Eric recently had knee replacement surgery through Southwest General's Orthopedic Joint Center (OJC).

"The OJC offers shorter hospital stays and more rapid recovery for patients having



knee and hip replacement surgery," says Michael Banks, MD, an orthopedic surgeon on the Medical Staff at Southwest General and medical director of the OJC. "Everyone caring for you, from the nurse to the therapist to your doctor, knows the program and is there to support you and offer personalized care. It's a very comprehensive and comforting program but also provides the motivation to get you up and moving."

Bonnie had her right knee replaced in September and her left knee replaced three months later.

"Before the surgery, I couldn't take 20 steps without feeling excruciating pain," she says. "It was like getting stabbed with hot poker. After getting treatment for a year and a half, I knew it was time for surgery. I talked to friends, co-workers and relatives, and they all said Southwest General was the place to go. My surgery was performed on Tuesday, and I was home by Friday."

Eric calls the program a "no nonsense approach to knee replacement."

"You have surgery on Tuesday morning," he explains. "The next morning they get you up to go to breakfast and to the bathroom by yourself. By Thursday, they have you walking around the hallways and climbing stairs, and then you go home on Friday."

Both Eric and Bonnie attended the optional pre-operative and post-therapy fitness programs before and after their Physical Therapy at LifeWorks of Southwest General.



Bonnie Steele (left) and Eric Parsson

Eric's surgeries were in September and January. In April, he and Bonnie successfully walked a mile in Southwest General's 30th annual Old Oak Run—the hospital's 5k run and one-mile walk.

"The pain is completely gone from my left knee, and my right one is a work in progress," he says. "It's so much better than before the surgery. The arthritic pain was constant. After the surgery, as you heal, it comes and goes, until eventually you don't feel it at all."

After her surgeries, and subsequent physical therapy sessions at LifeWorks, Bonnie says her knees are pain-free.

"My outlook is so much better," she reports. "Now I know I'll be able to keep up with my family and friends. I'm so glad I had this done."

At the time Bonnie shared her story, she was still unsure if her new knees would be flexible enough to resume her gardening. About a week, later she e-mailed the good news.

"I was outside for two hours in the garden getting rid of weeds," she wrote. "I have enough bend in my knees to accomplish the task—I was so happy. I can enjoy my gardening."

Bonnie and Eric agreed that the experience at the OJC was wonderful from beginning to end.

To learn more about the Orthopedic Joint Center and for patient referral information, call Health Connection at 440-816-5050.

How It Works

The Orthopedic Joint Center enhances patient outcomes and reduces length of stay through:

- **Pre-surgery patient education** – Helps patients know what to expect so they can properly prepare and participate fully in the recovery process.
- **Teamwork** – A dedicated team of skilled specialists provides each patient with individual attention from pre-surgery education through post-surgery rehab.
- **Advanced technology** – Computer-assisted technology for better implant alignment and quicker recovery.
- **Standardized protocols** – Procedures for anesthesia, pain management and rehab to help recovery start sooner.
- **Champion support** – Patients select a trusted, dependable family member or friend to serve as their champion.
- **Emphasis on wellness** – Patients are treated as healthy individuals during their stay to promote the rehab process. They enjoy spacious private rooms with a variety of amenities and shared meals in the comfortable patient dining room.

For more information, visit www.swgeneral.com/Ortho.