



HEALTH CURRENTS

WINTER 2008

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO HEALTHY LIVING

WWW.GRMEDCENTER.COM

Is joint surgery right for you?

You may benefit from surgery if:

- Pain limits your everyday activities, such as walking or bending.
- Pain continues when you rest, either day or night.
- Stiffness limits your ability to move the joint.
- You get little pain relief from anti-inflammatory drugs or glucosamine sulfate.
- You have harmful or unpleasant side effects from medications.
- Other treatments, such as physical therapy or the use of gait aides, do not relieve pain.
- You are increasingly dependent on family and friends for care.

Your family doctor or orthopedic surgeon will evaluate your condition and explain the best method to relieve your pain and improve your mobility. For a referral to an orthopedic surgeon, call the physician referral line at **830-303-4846**.

favorably to other hospitals locally and nationally," explains orthopedic surgeon Jack Deetjen, MD.

Dr. Deetjen joined the GRMC medical staff in July 1992. He and G. Steven White, MD, another board-certified orthopedist who has practiced in Seguin since 1984, often assist each other in surgery, providing their patients with the benefit of two orthopedic minds thinking through the surgery. Their well-established reputations for excellence in joint surgery and orthopedic care helped cement the decision of Irvin Sahni, MD, to establish his orthopedic and spine surgery practice in Seguin in August 2003.

When joints hurt, medicines, exercise, and heat or cold applications may provide some relief. However, if pain from arthritis, injuries or other joint problems is severe, your physician may discuss surgery as a treatment option. Joints are among the most hardworking parts of your body. When your foot hits the ground, for example, force is transmitted to the hip joint at the rate of about three times your body weight. So when a 200-pound person walks, they put 600 pounds of force across their hip joint with each step. It's not surprising that our joints often simply wear out.

NEW JOINTS OFFER RELIEF

The good news is that these worn-out joints can be replaced. And for those who decide to

—Continued on page 3



Orthopedic surgeons Drs. White and Deetjen replace a diseased knee in one of GRMC's state-of-the-art operating rooms. During the past year, more than 1,400 inpatient surgery procedures and 1,700 outpatient surgery procedures were performed at the Medical Center, including more than 200 joint replacements.

Joint efforts at GRMC

WHAT DO Mary Lou Retton, Jack Nicklaus, Elizabeth Taylor, Charlton Heston and Mike Ditka have in common, besides incredible talent? They have all benefited, along with more than 700,000 other Americans each year, from one of the most amazing advancements in medical technology in the past century—joint replacement.

Years ago, people suffering from severe chronic pain caused by injuries or illnesses such as arthritis, had little choice but to endure their conditions. Today the highly skilled, board-certified surgeons at Guadalupe Regional Medical Center are replacing shoulders, hips, knees and ankles with joints made from strong, durable materials, enabling more

than 200 GRMC patients each year to significantly improve their quality of life.

OUTSTANDING CARE

The comprehensive orthopedic surgery program at GRMC, known for the excellence of its physicians and exceptionally low infection rates, includes orthopedic trauma, sports medicine, adult reconstruction (total joint replacements) and spine surgery. Infection rates at GRMC for these surgeries are about half the accepted national rate. In addition, complication rates from surgery are low for GRMC patients.

"We have an excellent total joint program—our results are real numbers that compare very

CEO'S MESSAGE

A calling for health care in a culture of excellence

Many of the people who dedicate their lives to health care have referred to their chosen profession as a "calling." Why do we feel called? Perhaps the answer lies in a need to, as our mission says, "make a positive difference in every life we are privileged to touch."

In today's health care environment, it is more important than ever to realize the difference between work and a calling. This difference is what makes our profession worthwhile and rewarding. It is what sustains and motivates us to continue to excel—to serve our patients with both our minds and our hearts.

Responding to this calling means that we don't just care for patients, we want to provide them with both clinical and service excellence.

As we begin to build an outstanding new facility, you also have my commitment to continue to build a hospital culture focused on excellence. We already have the foundation in place, but a culture of excellence is an ongoing process. We face new challenges every day. We are indeed building for life as we continue caring for life.



Robert Haynes,
Chief Executive Officer

Sincerely,

Robert Haynes
Chief Executive Officer

NEED A PHYSICIAN?

Physician Referral Line

830-303-4846

Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

At GRMC: Check out these staff additions and promotions



HOMAR J. BARTRA, MD, FACP, joins the Inpatient Medicine Physicians Hospitalist Group of Guadalupe Regional Medical Center: Guido Calderon, MD; Steve Slagle, MD; and Martin Levett, MD. All four are board-certified internists. Hospitalists

are hospital-based physicians whose primary focus is the general medical care of adult hospital inpatients, helping to ensure high quality and efficient care. Dr. Bartra received his medical degree from San Agustin University School of Medicine in Arequipa, Peru, and completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at the University of Illinois in Chicago. In addition, he served as a clinical instructor in internal medicine for the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. He has received numerous awards, including the Teacher of Distinction Award in 2003 from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.



JOSEPH HONG, MD, joins Guadalupe Regional Medical Center staff as a pulmonology specialist. Dr. Hong is board-certified in internal medicine, critical care medicine, pulmonary disease and sleep medicine. The GRMC medical staff has actively

been recruiting a pulmonologist to help serve the high number of people in this community with pulmonary problems such as asthma, bronchitis, COPD, allergies and emphysema. A pulmonologist brings specialty training and experience to diagnosing and treating these illnesses. A growing field for pulmonologists is the study of sleep disorders, which are related to a variety of health problems. Dr. Hong's local availability will allow our community to be treated for both pulmonary and sleep disorders without having to travel out of town.

In addition, pulmonologists also have expertise in critical care such as ventilator management in the intensive care unit. The addition of pulmonary care to the existing services of

internal medicine and cardiopulmonary care will further broaden the critical care resources at GRMC. Dr. Hong received his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston and completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City. Dr. Hong completed a fellowship in pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine at Scott and White Memorial Hospital in Temple, Texas.

Dr. Hong is moving to our area from Richmond, Ind., where he was director of pulmonary and sleep medicine at Reid Hospital. Dr. Hong was recently married; he and his wife are looking forward to returning to their Texas roots.



KIM DEESE, RN, MBA, has joined GRMC as chief nursing officer, replacing Susan Motta, RN, who recently retired. Deese comes to GRMC with a broad nursing management background, including information systems, ancillary departments, quality

management and case management. Since 1999 Deese has held management positions for McKenna Health System in New Braunfels, including the position of chief information officer and vice president of technology; vice president for clinical services; and vice president for nursing services. From 1981 until joining McKenna, Deese worked in various nursing management positions. She is a graduate of Jacksonville University in Florida with a bachelor of science in nursing, and she received an MBA in health care management from American Intercontinental University in Chicago.

GRMC also announces the promotion of **MARY HUMPHREY, RN, MSN,** from emergency room director to assistant chief nursing officer. Humphrey has served as director of the emergency room since July 2006 and has more than 25 years of nursing experience. She received her bachelor of science in nursing from the University of Phoenix and her masters of science in nursing from Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi. ❖

GRMC receives prestigious Nurse-Friendly™ designation

The Texas Nurses Association (TNA), a state-wide professional organization of registered nurses, recently announced that Guadalupe Regional Medical Center has joined the list of hospitals in Texas who have earned the prestigious Nurse-Friendly™ hospital designation. The naming of the Fall 2007 recipients of the designation now raises the total number of facilities who have achieved the impressive distinction to 49. There are approximately 581 licensed hospitals in Texas.

"We are extremely proud of Guadalupe Regional Medical Center's exemplary nursing staff for having achieved this important designa-

tion," says CEO Robert Haynes. "This award demonstrates the high level of commitment by our nursing team to quality patient care and to patient satisfaction."

GRMC Board of Managers Chairman Robert D. Galloway, PhD; GRMC CEO Robert Haynes; and representatives of the nursing staff, Sue Weaver, RN; Helen Petty, RN; Susan Motta, RN; and Cris Salley, RN, received the designation at a special awards ceremony held during TNA's seventh annual Nursing Leadership Conference, a two-day event held in Austin that brought together some of nursing's foremost researchers, intellectual leaders and

policymakers. TNA's Nurse-Friendly designation confirms that Guadalupe Regional has—in its practices, policies and procedures—the 12 essential elements of the ideal nursing practice environment as defined by nurses and research. These elements are important for the highest quality of patient care, nursing practice, professional development and nurse job satisfaction.

"Hospitals who apply for the designation must demonstrate through a quite rigorous process that they're committed to supporting a nursing practice environment that is consistent with excellent patient care," says Susan Sportsman, PhD, RN, president of TNA.

Nurse-Friendly is a trademark of the Texas Nurses Association. ❖

ORTHOPEDICS

Spinal mysteries

DIAGNOSING AND TREATING BACK PAIN

BACK PAIN IS ONE of the leading reasons Americans visit a physician. “A lot can go wrong with a complex structure such as your spine,” explains Irvin Sahni, MD, board-certified spine surgeon. “When your lower back hurts, it may be bones, muscles, tendons, ligaments or nerves that are involved. A physical examination and diagnostic imaging (such as CT, EMG, MRI or x-ray) can help us pinpoint just what’s wrong. Then, and only then, can we decide on the best treatment plan.”

WHAT CAUSES BACK PAIN?

Lower back pain can be triggered by something as simple as bending, reaching or lifting something heavy. It may also be related to obesity, smoking, sleeping in the wrong position or even stress. Kids may get back pain from an overloaded backpack. Older folks may hurt from changes in the discs between bones in the spinal column. A bulging disc can put pressure on nerves in the spinal cord. A dried-out disc may be an ineffective shock absorber, leading to pain. Sometimes the spinal canal narrows, putting pressure on nerve roots inside the canal. And sometimes spinal pain is caused by arthritis, osteoporosis or abnormal curving of the spine.



Irvin Sahni, MD

OPTIONS FOR TREATMENT

Depending on your case, your physician may prescribe bed rest for one or two days. You may also be advised to: ■ Apply hot and cold compresses. ■ Exercise or receive physical therapy to strengthen muscles. ■ Take medicines to reduce pain.

In some cases, when other treatment options fail, surgery may be recommended. Guadalupe Regional Medical Center’s spinal surgery program, led by Dr. Sahni, is staffed by dedicated, experienced professionals.

Dr. Sahni, a highly skilled and knowledgeable surgeon who trained at Baylor College of Medicine, uses the latest advancements in spinal surgery techniques, including a state-of-the-art surgical microscope and spine table. Dr. Sahni’s minimally invasive surgery techniques and highly sophisticated procedures include:

- Anterior cervical fusion—to repair herniated cervical discs.
- Kyphoplasty—to address the collapse or fracture of vertebrae.

A deeper look:
An image of
the spine may
reveal the source
of pain.

9 ways to a healthier back

Prevent pain before it starts. Minimize your risk for back pain with these tips:

- When standing, stand with one foot forward, knees slightly bent. Maintain the natural arch of your back.
- When sitting, sit with your knees slightly higher than your hips. Use a lumbar support pillow. Get up and move around every hour or so.
- Push, don’t pull, heavy objects.
- To pick up an object, bend at the knees—not the waist. Lift with your legs, not your back, with the object close to your body. Avoid twisting.
- Stand on a sturdy stool to reach things above shoulder level.
- Place pillows under your knees if you sleep on your back, or lie on your side with a pillow between your knees. A firm mattress is generally best for your back.
- Control your weight.
- Don’t smoke.
- Exercise regularly to keep muscles strong and flexible.

Source: North American Spine Society

- Lumbar fusion—to correct instability of the spine.
- Lumbar decompression—to remove materials causing pain or pressure.
- Lumbar discectomy—to repair herniated lumbar discs.
- Lumbar laminectomy—to address pinched nerves or neural impingement.

For those recovering from surgery, GRMC’s team of nursing and therapy professionals supports postop back patients through a multidisciplinary comprehensive program to speed their recovery. ❖

Sources: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons; American Association of Neurological Surgeons; National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

Joint efforts

—Continued from page 1

have this surgery, there’s more good news. Hospital stays for the procedures are shorter than ever before—normally just a few days. And most patients who undergo total hip replacement begin standing and walking with assistance the day after surgery

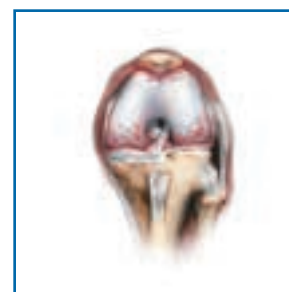


Jack Deetjen, MD



G. Steven White, MD

and resume most normal, light activities within three to six weeks. Specially trained nurses and physical therapists are assigned to



These before and after photos show the repair of a diseased hip and knee.

patients to assist during their inpatient stays. In addition, GRMC offers comprehensive postoperative therapy through its inpatient rehab and outpatient therapy programs. Incision lengths are also decreasing, but Dr. Deetjen believes minimally invasive joint surgery is not always the best option.

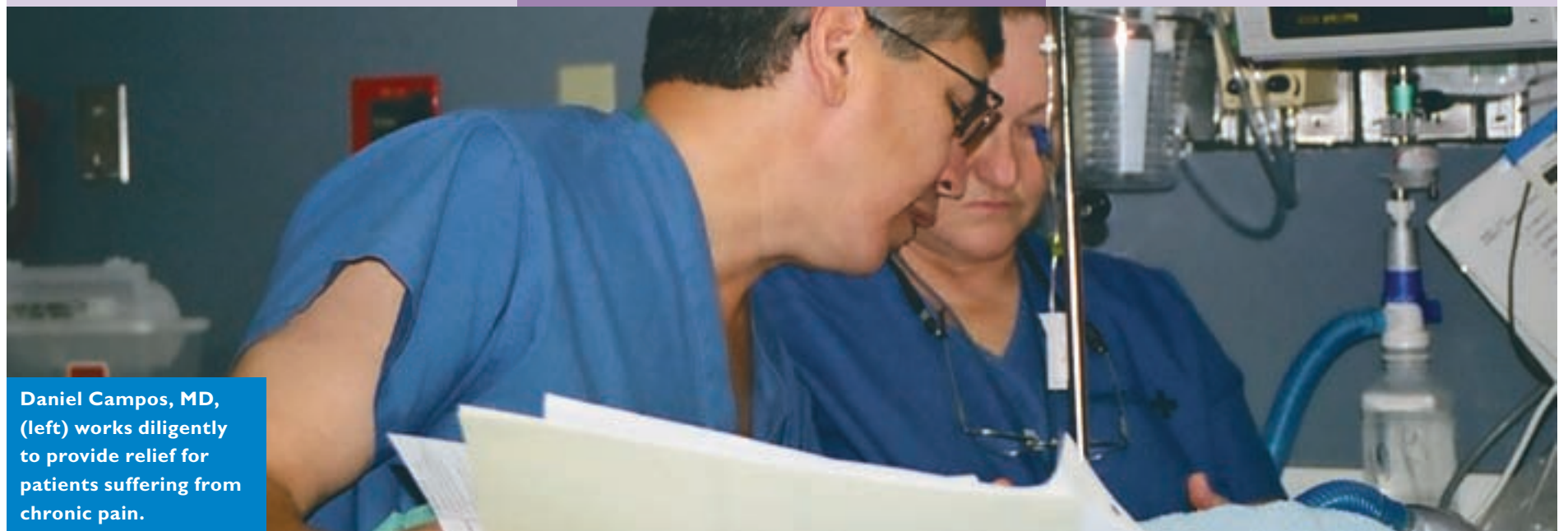
“You must make the incision the appropriate length for that specific patient’s needs,” Dr. Deetjen says. “If you make it too small, it may compromise long-term results and increase the risk of complications. We know how to do minimally invasive

surgery; it’s just not always appropriate. We do what’s right for our patient.”

Skilled surgeons, postoperative care by board-certified physicians, highly trained nurses and state-of-the-art operating and rehabilitation facilities are reassuring to patients, but perhaps the best assurance comes from results.

“About 95 percent of our patients do good to excellent with this operation,” Dr. Deetjen says. “Their quality of life significantly improves, and that’s what our work is all about.” ❖

CARING. FOR LIFE.



Daniel Campos, MD, (left) works diligently to provide relief for patients suffering from chronic pain.

Helping you manage chronic pain

THE GUADALUPE REGIONAL Medical Center Pain Management Program plays an important role in the treatment and recovery process of patients suffering from chronic spine-related pain. Chronic pain affects many people, and often there is no cure for the source of their pain. While treating chronic pain can prove difficult, most patients benefit from aggressive pain management.



Daniel Campos, MD

Pain management practitioners come from a number of medical specialties; many are anesthesiologists. GRMC physicians Daniel Campos, MD, and Dolores Major, MD, are anesthesiologists who specialize in pain management—primarily spinal injections.

“Pain management often utilizes nonsurgical interventions

to help patients cope with chronic pain,” says Dr. Campos. “Each patient is unique. The goal is to provide as much relief as possible.”

There are many procedures used to treat chronic pain in addition to medications, physical therapy, therapeutic massage and acupuncture. Patients with complicated chronic pain syndromes are referred to comprehensive multidisciplinary pain practices.

INJECTIONS FOR RELIEF

Injections are often used for both diagnostic and therapeutic purposes in patients with pain related to spinal diseases. A common injection is epidural steroid injection, in which corticosteroids and local anesthetics are injected. The steroid acts as an anti-inflammatory agent, often reducing swelling of these nerves and decreasing pain. There are different types of epidural steroid injections that can be used from the cervical, thoracic, lumbar and sacral spine.



Dolores Major, MD

Most people are surprised that there is minimal pain associated with these injections, and that they take only five to 10 minutes. Patients are offered the choice of sedation if they are anxious.

With epidural steroid injections, most people begin to notice relief of their symptoms within 48 to 72 hours. The number of injections required is determined by the patient's response to the first injection and desire for additional injections. Usually two to three injections over a two-month period are performed.

Dr. Major and Dr. Campos have a referral-based practice. Once patients have been evaluated by their primary care physicians, neurologists or surgical specialists, they are referred for injections if appropriate. ❖

HEALTH CURRENTS

HEALTH CURRENTS is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of GUADALUPE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER, 1215 E. Court St., Seguin, TX 78155. Telephone: 800-506-6394 or 830-379-2411 Website: www.grmedcenter.com

GUADALUPE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER'S mission is to be the preferred provider of excellent and comprehensive health care, making a positive difference in every life we are privileged to touch.

Robert D. Galloway, PhD
Chairman of the Board

Robert Haynes
Chief Executive Officer

Michelle Rumbaut
Associate Administrator

Penny Wallace
Chief Financial Officer

Kim Deese, RN, MBA
Chief Nursing Officer

Fay Bennett
Director of Human Resources

Health Currents Editor:

Dorothy Wiley
Director of Public Relations and Marketing

Information in HEALTH CURRENTS comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider.

Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

Copyright © 2008 Coffey Communications, Inc. LHN21305h



Living well with diabetes

Guadalupe Regional Medical Center offers free diabetes education classes designed to help people newly diagnosed with diabetes, as well as those who have been previously diagnosed, understand the effects of diabetes on the body as a whole.

The three-week series is a comprehensive presentation of medical and nutrition information intended to offer a deeper understanding of the need for proactive management of the disease.

There are several opportunities throughout the year to attend these evening classes, which are now offered in February to June and August to November.

Each series will occur on the first, second and third Thursdays of the month. Registration is requested, and family and friends are welcome to attend.

For more information on these free classes, please contact the Nutritional Services Department of Guadalupe Regional Medical Center at 830-401-7349. ❖