

St. Joseph Mercy Robotic Surgery Benefits Hip Patients

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 St. Joseph Mercy Hospital

In a time when other hospitals are making budget cuts and trimming services, one local hospital continues to move forward and invest in the community with a new, sophisticated robotic surgery services.

St. Joseph Mercy Hospital is expanding the region's only state of the art robotic orthopedic service. The recent addition of MAKOpasty® Total Hip Arthroplasty, now offers the most highly advanced surgeon-controlled robotic technology across the state of Michigan.

"We're on the leading edge of where orthopedics and joint replacement are headed," said Rajesh Makim, MD, of Orthopedic Associates of Port Huron, PC. "Computers are essential tools and are going to have much larger roles in many procedures."

Dr. Makim is one of four local surgeons being trained to perform the new technique. Todd Murphy, MD, and Scott Heithoff, DO, both also of Orthopedic Associates, are completing their certification. Edward Nebel, MD, of Nebel Orthopedics, PC, has already obtained his certification.

The addition makes St. Joseph Mercy Port Huron the first hospital in the state of Michigan to

launch robotic-assisted hip replacement surgery. The hospital was also the first to bring surgeon-controlled robotic knee resurfacing surgery to southeast Michigan and the Thumb region. Like its predecessor, the MAKOpasty® Total Hip Arthroplasty (THA) service is another enhanced robotic surgery designed to support the surgeon's ability to virtually expand their expertise and more accurately align and position implants through a global positioning system (GPS)-guided, three dimensional (3-D) surgical imagery that better meets the joint replacement needs of the patient.

"Total hip replacement surgery is arguably one of the most successful surgeries developed in the last half of the twentieth century," Dr. Nebel said. "This new technique will make it even more successful."

SURGICAL BENEFITS

Powered by the RIO® Robotic Arm Interactive Orthopedic system, this newest technique may reduce potential complications associated with conventional hip replacement surgery. The total hip replacement application provides a preoperative, 3-D reconstruction of the patient's hip and is used to develop a patient-specific plan. Similar to it the highly successful

partial knee resurfacing application, the robotic arm assists the surgeon during the procedure to accurately prepare the joint and optimally place the implant.

"This is arguably the greatest benefit of this technology," explains Scott Heithoff, DO. "Through the combined use of the robot and computer mapping system, the placement accuracy of the implant is greatly enhanced. This translates into better function of the hip, with less complications as well as the potential of extended longevity of the hip prosthesis."

Nearly 10 million Americans suffer from osteoarthritis (OA) of the hip, or wearing away of the cartilage that cushions the bones of the hips, causing hip pain and stiffness. This affects mobility, including walking and bending.

One of several degenerative joint diseases (DJDs), hip OA is the most common cause of hip replacement surgery.

A June 2011 survey from Harris Interactive reported that nine out of every 10 respondents thought that hip replacement gives people back their independence and believes it can restore a better quality of life.

"The American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons have been looking at this over the past 8 to 10 years,"



Dr. Nebel said, "and we found that computer-assisted surgery alone hasn't helped improve results. But computer-assisted robotic surgery enhances success up to 90 percent."

He said placement of the socket, or cup, is the most critical component in successful hip replacement and recovery.

"Research shows that a leading group of surgeons are only

successful 50 percent of the time with traditional hip replacement," Dr. Nebel continued. "The precision and accuracy this surgery provides is going to increase those odds greatly."

Dr. Makim agrees. "Sometimes the surgeon can't see the misplacement of the cup during surgery. This new computer accuracy will prevent that," he said.

IMPROVED OUTCOMES

The improved accuracy will help prevent complications such as unequal leg length, instability, and a wear-related phenomenon that patients often experience as a result of to improper socket positioning with the conventional approaches.

"Unequal leg length means the patient has to wear a shoe lift or special heel, or even use a cane because of the unevenness. That can not only makes him/her unstable, but often causes him/her to lurch forward," Dr. Makim said. "This new surgery will help prevent that because it is all templated out ahead of time."

Patients of robotic-assisted surgical procedures can potentially experience other numerous benefits, including a shorter hospital stay and quicker recovery.

"I have completed 125 partial knee replacements with the robotic-assisted procedure in the past 18 months that we have had it available, and they are all doing exceptionally well," Dr. Nebel said. "While this is a relatively new procedure, I am

expecting an equal success rate with the hip replacements."

WHO IS A GOOD CANDIDATE?

Patients who have one or more of the following symptoms may be good candidates:

- Pain while putting weight on the affected joints
- Limping to lessen the weight-bearing pressure on the hip
- Hip pain or stiffness during walking or other impact activities
- Failure to respond to non-surgical treatments or pain medications

TECHNOLOGY OF TOMORROW

"I'm really excited about this technology because it truly is the beginning of what surgeons and patients can expect with joint placements of the future," concludes Dr. Heithoff. "This is the tip of the iceberg when it comes to knee, hip and shoulder care. With robotic technology, we can take procedures that are already being done very well and improve upon their success, ultimately providing the patient with enhanced care, improved mobility and a better quality of life."

If you are considering joint replacement surgery, speak with your physician about robotic surgery. You can also attend a monthly education session, presented by one of our certified surgeons. To learn more about future sessions, or obtain a referral to a qualified MAKOpasty® hip replacement surgeon, call toll free 1-888-MERCYME, or visit us online at mymercy.us.



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