

Live from St. Luke's OR

Webcast shows knee replacement surgery

Mary Lou Thornburg of Independence plans to go bowling this summer. To most people it wouldn't seem like a big deal to go bowling but for Thornburg it means she's met a big goal she set for herself.

"I told myself when I was back to normal I would go bowling," said Thornburg. "After years of near constant pain in my right knee I decided to have knee replacement surgery. And now several weeks post surgery I'm feeling the best I have felt in years."

"The most common reason for a hip or knee replacement is arthritis," said Jeffrey Nassif, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon with Physicians' Clinic of Iowa, P.C. "Other causes include injury or disease. We recommend joint replacement surgery as a last resort. Patients will usually tell us when the pain has become too much for them. Once other options are exhausted we then talk about surgery. A new joint will typically last about 20 to 30 years depending on how active the individual is."

Thornburg, 59, had severe pain in her knee for about six years. For a time she was able to manage the pain with cortisone injections but a fall down the stairs last winter prompted her to seek help.

Rapid recovery

"Dr. Nassif told me about a special procedure at St. Luke's for joint replacement patients," said Thornburg. "He said I could have surgery and return home the following day. It was just what I was looking for. I was ready to feel better and get moving again."

At St. Luke's, patients who have joint replacement surgery are getting out of the hospital and back to their lives faster than ever. The program that's making this happen is called Rapid Recovery. Since the program began, patients are returning home on average in three days or less. The shorter length of stay means patients have fewer complications, less infections and better outcomes. Rapid Recovery utilizes a combination of patient education, surgical techniques and a personally tailored pain regimen all of which combined gets patients home sooner.

Live Webcast surgeries

If Thornburg looks familiar it may be because she was recently featured in a live St. Luke's Webcast and in news stories on KCRG-TV. St. Luke's Hospital educates the public by teaming up with area surgeons to bring live surgery Webcasts to eastern Iowans. It's all in response to the increased demand for health and medical information.

Last year a da Vinci hysterectomy was performed by Jerry Rozeboom, MD and

Mary Lou Thornburg is ready to bowl once again following knee replacement surgery.



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Jeffrey Nassif, MD, orthopaedic surgeon
Physicians' Clinic of Iowa, P.C.

Owen McCarron, MD from OB-GYN Associates, P.C., Jon Rippentrop, MD, Physicians' Clinic of Iowa, P.C., Department of Urology and St. Luke's Minimally Invasive Surgery medical director provided commentary along with KCRG-TV Anchor Ashley Hinson.

In April, Thornburg's knee replacement surgery was St. Luke's second live Webcast surgery. Dr. Nassif operated and Sandeep Munjal, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon with Physicians' Clinic of Iowa, P.C. provided commentary along with KCRG-TV Anchor Ashley Hinson. Craig Hovda, a St. Luke's Emergency Department doctor also participated from the patient point of view – as he has had a similar procedure.

"I replaced Dr. Hovda's right knee last year and he was willing to share his experience as a former patient with the viewers," said Dr. Munjal. "I was able to interview him during the Webcast and

help prospective patients understand the process and what to expect for recovery. I think Webcast surgeries are very useful for patients and I had very good feedback from my patients who watched and continue to watch it. It is educational for patients and their families."

"I have received a lot of positive feedback from patients about the live surgery," said Dr. Nassif. "Patients tell me they liked seeing the procedure, what arthritis

looked like and the mechanics of the procedure. I continue to refer many of my patients who are considering knee replacement surgery to watch the on-demand Webcast

on St. Luke's Web site."

"It was neat for me to watch my surgery," said Thornburg. "I'm also glad I could help others see what knee replacement surgery is all about. I recommend knee replacement surgery to everyone who asks – I am so glad I did it. I would do it all over again."

Physical therapy

Part of what gets joint replacement patients moving so quickly following surgery is participating in physical therapy (PT). Thornburg said she had her first PT session shortly after her surgery.

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Physicians' Clinic of Iowa, P.C.

"The therapists were so great," Thornburg said. "They got me up and moving just a few hours after I woke up. I was even walking with the aid of a walker. And after I left St. Luke's I stayed with my daughter and started PT on an outpatient basis."

During the first week after surgery Rapid Recovery patients like Thornburg attend PT every day. After that they attend several weeks of therapy.

"Really participating in PT after surgery is the key to getting your knee moving again," said Thornburg. "You have to attend therapy and do the exercises."

Today, Thornburg is back at work and feels the best she has felt in years. She's doing all the things she loves – gardening, chasing after her grandchildren and looking forward to bowling again soon.

"I feel great," said Thornburg. "I wish I would have done this years ago."

■ To view the prerecorded surgery Webcasts log on to stlukescr.org and click on the surgery page.

