# NEW JOINTS FOR NEW VIGOR

FOR SOME, KNEE OR HIP REPLACEMENT CAN MEAN AN END TO PAIN AND A RETURN TO ACTIVITY. HERE ARE TWO SUCCESS STORIES.

Cheryl Ahrens and Mark W. Gesell, M.D., FACS

AT MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER'S Joint Replacement Center, patients get more than new knees, new hips and new shoulders. They get another chance at being active and doing the things they love—thanks to expert care from a highly specialized team that delivers excellence at every stage, from pre-surgical education and preoperative testing through surgery, recovery and rehabilitation.

Besides board-certified, fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeons with specialized joint replacement training, Monmouth's team includes nurses, therapists and others specifically trained to care for people with orthopedic injuries or conditions. Says David Chalnick, M.D., medical director of the Joint Replacement Program: "Our protocols for hip, knee and shoulder replacement can, in many cases, help reduce length of stay, prevent complications and lead to improved outcomes."

Joint replacement surgery should never be undertaken lightly. But if you have joint pain that limits your mobility, this treatment may be your best option for a dramatically enhanced quality of life. That's what it was for these two:

## GOOD-BYE TO DECADES OF KNEE PAIN!

As an office manager at a Holmdel-based engineering consulting firm, 60-year-old Cheryl Ahrens of Belford faced two daunting sets of steps leading to her office each day—a challenge for someone who had struggled with chronic knee pain since her 40s.

"Both of my knees hurt—one crunched—when I went down the steps, and at times my kneecap felt like it was going to explode," says Cheryl.

Previously, she had opted out of a tendon release procedure that could have helped with the pain. But after watching a colleague with knee pain wait so long that minimally invasive surgery was no longer an option, Cheryl knew she had to act before it was too late. She made an appointment with board-certified orthopedic surgeon Mark W. Gesell, M.D., FACS, who specializes in hip and knee joint replacement surgery at Monmouth Medical Center.

Dr. Gesell told Cheryl that, while her knees were now too far gone for a tendon release procedure, she was a good candidate for MAKOplasty surgery—a robotic arm-assisted procedure designed to relieve the pain caused by joint degeneration. By selectively targeting the damaged part of the knee, Dr. Gesell could use this minimally invasive procedure to help relieve Cheryl's pain while sparing the healthy bone and ligaments surrounding the damaged portion of her knees.

"Dr. Gesell is kind and has a good bedside manner—he explained all my options and guided me toward MAKOplasty," says Cheryl. "I'm glad I was able to get this done before I had to undergo a full knee replacement, because this procedure was much less invasive."

Before surgery, Cheryl went to Monmouth Medical Center for an information session, which she found very helpful. There she learned what to expect before, during and after surgery. "The instructor answered all of my questions and told me, 'You will get up the day of your surgery,'" says Cheryl, who underwent bilateral partial knee replacements with MAKOplasty in January.

Just as the instructor had predicted, she got out of bed within 24 hours of surgery, albeit with some help.

"At one point, I was having trouble getting out of a chair, and the team rallied around me and lifted me to a stand," says Cheryl. "They wouldn't let me fail—I was impressed by that." She adds that the nurses' attentiveness and encouragement were especially helpful during her recovery. "They knew exactly what to do to get me up. What a great hospital—everyone pushed me to succeed."

At six weeks post-surgery, Cheryl had made tremendous progress. "I no longer hear crunching, and my knees are feeling good," she says. She's looking forward to resuming old customs—rollerblading and walking four miles daily, for example—and she's enjoying her pain-free mobility, stairs and all.

## A LONGTIME ATHLETE GETS HIP

After playing offensive tackle for the University of Rhode Island—followed by 30 years of recreational basketball—Mike Jensen had severe hip pain from all the wear and tear. But thanks to minimally invasive hip replacement surgery at Monmouth Medical Center, the 50-year-old Brielle resident is now pain-free and back to an active lifestyle.

"Before the surgery, it got to the point where I couldn't walk long distances," recalls Mike. "Every day, walking was an issue."

He made appointments with several surgeons, and each said the same thing: Mike needed a hip replacement. The cartilage in his left hip had worn away, causing severe arthritis.

"It was just bone on bone," recalls the 6' 3" athlete, who owns a medical equipment business and sells commercial real estate.

After limping around for another year, Mike saw Dr. Chalnick. Mike's condition had become so bad that he was definitely ready for surgery. Dr. Chalnick performed the procedure on a Monday morning, and by late that afternoon Mike was walking down the hall with a walker. About a week later he returned to work. Two weeks after leaving the hospital, he was walking without assistance.

"The care was exceptional," says Mike. "I had minimal pain. Everyone, from pre-admission to the nursing staff, was very professional."

"Mike has had a wonderful result from surgery," says Dr. Chalnick, a fellowship-trained, board-certified orthopedic surgeon who is one of the few in New Jersey who perform robot-assisted joint replacement surgery. "He played a key part in the surgery's success, too, as he's in excellent shape and is very motivated."

Mike prepared for surgery by exercising on a stationary bike and elliptical trainer. He stayed at Monmouth Medical Center just three days. "I was taken care of very well and did as much physical therapy as possible during my stay," he recalls.

Since the operation, he's continued to work out diligently. And though he gave up basketball, he remains very active with golf and stand-up paddling.

### » DO YOU HAVE HIP OR KNEE PAIN?

If you believe a joint replacement procedure could be the answer for you, you can find out about the latest minimally invasive options—including robotic-assisted partial knee and total hip replacement—by attending an information session at Monmouth Medical Center. Led by a board-certified orthopedic surgeon, sessions are given monthly on Wednesday afternoons at 5 p.m., and except where indicated below they take place in the Unterberg Learning Center. Light refreshments are served. Upcoming dates:

—**June 17** (in Stanley 206), **July 8, Sept. 30, Nov. 18:** Speaker: Mark W. Gesell, M.D.

—**Aug. 5 and Oct. 21:** Speaker: David Chalnick, M.D.

—**Dec. 2** (location to be determined): Speaker: Arthur Mark, M.D.

» To learn more, call The Joint Replacement Center at Monmouth Medical Center at 732.923.7666 or visit barnabashealth.org/mmcjoint.

David Chalnick, M.D., and Mike Jensen

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