

New knee implant saves the ligaments

24 July 2014, by Hannah F. Pietsch

A new total knee replacement that saves all of the ligaments can make a person's knee feel and move just like the original.

During a traditional total knee replacement, the surgeon must remove the "island" of bone to which the [anterior cruciate ligament](#) (ACL) and the posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) are attached. The new knee features a shape that protects that island of bone and saves the ligaments.

"When a patient comes in with a torn ACL or PCL, most orthopedic surgeons recommend surgery to repair the ligament because of its importance to the natural function of the knee," said William Bryan, M.D., a Houston Methodist orthopedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine and total joint replacement. "The ligaments provide stability for the joint and increase the patient's ability to perform complex movements, such as dancing, gardening or golfing. This new knee implant dramatically changes the patient experience with total knee replacements."

Recovery after a traditional knee replacement is four to five months, but Bryan's patients who have received the new knee implant are averaging a three to four month recovery period. Some patients, like Ron Krist, a 77-year-old Houston lawyer, have returned to their favorite activities even sooner.

"Several of my friends with knee replacements were unable to play golf for at least four months after their surgery," Krist said. "I was back on the course and playing full force just two months after getting this new knee replacement."

Bryan was one of 10 surgeons from across the country and the only surgeon in Houston to be selected as an early evaluator of the XP knee, made by Biomet. He said while many of his knee replacement patients are happy with their knee replacement, some complain that they are not able to physically do everything they previously could do.

"By saving the ligaments, this [knee implant](#) provides an improved range of motion and increases joint stability and natural movement for knee replacement patients," Bryan said.

Bryan believes that another benefit of saving the ACL and PCL for knee replacement patients is that the ligaments will take some of the strain off the metal and plastic components of the knee replacement and help it to last longer. Most artificial knees last approximately 10 years before needing to be replaced.

"For many years, the orthopedic community has recognized the need for total knee replacements that save the ligaments," Bryan said. "Now that technology and design have caught up with us, patients can now get a total [knee replacement](#) that works and feels a lot like a normal knee."

Provided by Houston Methodist

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