

St. Luke's Orthopaedic Services



St. Luke's Orthopaedic Surgical Group

A member of the St. Luke's Spine Center

610-954-6000

If you refer a patient to St. Luke's Spine Center, a comprehensive team of clinical professionals from various disciplines, including St. Luke's Orthopaedic Surgical Group, will evaluate the patient through a formal triage process and outline the most appropriate approach to treatment.

Referral Protocols

To get your back and neck pain patients to the appropriate specialist as quickly as possible, refer them to the St. Luke's Spine Center at 610-954-6000.

Intake Center

Based on clinical pathways developed by the center's clinical team, the St. Luke's Spine Center will refer back and neck pain patients to medical staff members who can provide the appropriate modality for conservative treatments such as physiatry, pain management, rehabilitation and neurological care or surgical intervention.

St. Luke's Spine Center Team

- St. Luke's Orthopaedic Surgical Group (Steven Puccio, DO)
- Allen Neurological Associates
- Physiatry / Pain Management Services
- St. Luke's Acute Rehabilitation Center
- St. Luke's Radiology Services
- St. Luke's Neurology Associates
- Physical Therapy at St. Luke's



William Delong, MD
Patrick Brogle, MD
Martin Arthur Cohen, MD
Steven Puccio, DO
B. Michael Kraynick, MD
Gregory F. Carolan, MD

St. Luke's Orthopaedic Surgical Group
St. Luke's Hospital, Priscilla Payne Hurd Pavilion
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St. Luke's Orthopaedic Surgical Group is a member of St. Luke's Physician Group and the St. Luke's Spine Center, and is affiliated with St. Luke's Hospital & Health Network.

My Health My Hospital.

Knee Pain: From the Pros to the Joes

It happens to professional athletes, weekend warriors and couch potatoes alike. In fact, knee pain from rheumatoid or osteoarthritis and injuries are the reasons for more than 19 million physician office visits every year.

According to William Delong, MD, chief of Orthopaedics at St. Luke's Hospital & Health Network, depending on the cause of knee pain and the diagnosis, fixes could include everything from anti-inflammatories and physical therapy to surgical arthroscopy, ligament reconstruction and total knee replacement.

Surgical arthroscopy can be used to treat RA as well as many common joint injuries including meniscus tears, ligament strains and tears and cartilage deterioration underneath the kneecap.

Surgical arthroscopy involves inserting an arthroscope (a small tube that contains optical fibers and lenses) and surgical instruments through tiny incisions next to the joint. "The arthroscope is connected to a video camera and the interior of the joint is seen on a television monitor," says Dr. Delong. "Surgical instruments help maneuver structures of the knee into the view of the arthroscope and are used to cut, remove and sew damaged tissue. Arthroscopy is an outpatient procedure and results in less tissue damage, less pain and a quicker recovery than a traditional procedure would."

ACL reconstruction is a more complex procedure, but is also performed arthroscopically. "Because the ACL does not heal on its own, an ACL reconstruction requires removal of the torn ligament and a tissue graft from a tendon in another part of the body," explains Dr. Delong. Recovery typically has a long-term time frame (six months to one year) and requires the services of a physical therapist to regain flexibility and strength, prevent scar tissue and reduce loss of muscle.

Total knee replacement is primarily performed to relieve pain from OA and RA, and consists of replacing the diseased and painful joint with metal and plastic components shaped to allow natural motion of the knee. This is a complex procedure that requires considerable recovery time and extensive rehabilitation, although according to Dr. Delong, is performed more and more on older patients. "There is today no age restriction for knee reconstruction," he says. "Physiologic age is more important than Chronological age, and people are generally in better shape at older ages than they used to be. That is changing the way we practice orthopaedic surgery."

The bottom line, says Dr. Delong, is that knee pain and injuries are the result of wear and tear, age and genes. "Will you ever develop arthritis or injure your knee? It's a gamble. But if you do, tell your doctor immediately or consult an orthopaedic surgeon. The sooner you address knee pain, the faster you get back on your feet."

Get Off Your Back & Back On Your Feet

Do you have back pain? Almost everyone does at one point or another. But is yours debilitating? Does it make it difficult to walk, work, play or perform daily chores? Does it make it impossible just to get out of bed? Have you run the gauntlet of painkillers, injections and anti-inflammatories with no improvement?

A relatively new, minimally invasive procedure called vertebral body replacement (VBR) using a STALIF implant might be just the thing to get you off your back and back on your feet.

According to Steven T. Puccio, DO, a spine surgery expert with St. Luke's Orthopaedic Surgical Group, VBR using the STALIF implant promises less trauma to muscle and soft tissue, less blood loss, a shorter hospital stay and a quicker recovery than traditional open back surgery. "This is not a silver bullet for back pain," says Dr. Puccio, "but it is an excellent option for those with debilitating pain who cannot find relief from traditional means of treatment. It involves making several small incisions in the abdomen and going through the natural split in the muscle there. We implant a very high tech polymer 'cage' in the spinal column to take the place of the problem disk and pack it with bone grafts from the hip to aid in healing. This is then held in place with three titanium screws."

Dr. Puccio was the first surgeon in the U.S. to perform this procedure in 2004 as well as the first to perform it in the Lehigh Valley at St. Luke's back in November 2006. Since that time he has performed several more VBRs here. "This procedure is not for everyone, and it does have some minor side effects," Dr. Puccio says, "but it has been shown to dramatically diminish debilitating pain – it has an excellent success rate."

For more information about vertebral body replacement (VBR) using a STALIF implant, call St. Luke's Orthopaedic Surgical Group at 610-807-9400.



St. Luke's Orthopaedic Surgical Group

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