

Area Surgeon Improves Hip Surgery With New Mini-Incision Procedure

Innovative surgical technique speeds patient recovery and reduces post-operative pain

Morris, IL, September 7, 2004: As Baby Boomers get older – but don't necessarily slow down – hip replacement surgery becomes more and more common. Each year in the U.S., nearly 35, 000 patients undergo the procedure, and experts say that number is growing because life expectancy is going up and people are remaining physically active longer than did previous generations.

Unfortunately, total hip replacement surgery typically knocks patients off their feet for months due to its invasive nature. However, one local surgeon is attempting to break with this tradition by using a remarkable new technique that reduces the length of the surgical incision by as much as 75-percent.

"Patients benefit tremendously from the reduction in the length of the incision," explains Eric Ortinau, M.D. of Rezin Orthopedic Centers, "A smaller incision means less cutting of soft tissue – that means there's less pain, a shorter hospital stay and a faster return to normal activity. It gets them back on their feet instead of flat on their back."

Dr. Ortinau uses a new set of surgical instruments recently developed by a medical device manufacturer, and he is among a handful of surgeons in the U.S. who are performing this mini-incision technique. Dr. Ortinau performs these procedures at Community Hospital of Ottawa.

During hip replacement surgery, the surgeon removes the top portion of the femur, replacing it with a metal stem with a ball on one end. He also removes the hip socket in the pelvis, replacing it with a metal shell and plastic liner. The ball rotates inside this plastic liner to recreate the ball and socket movement of the original joint.

In traditional hip surgery, the incision is between eight and twelve inches long. Using the new instrumentation, Dr. Ortinau is able to perform the operation through an incision as small as 3 to 4 inches.

"There are obvious cosmetic advantages to this mini-incision approach," says Dr. Ortinau. "But as a surgeon, I like the fact that my patients are able to reclaim their physically active lives so much faster than expected. I believe this will eventually be the standard of care in orthopedic medicine, and it's nice to be able to bring this advanced surgery to local patients now."