

New knee surgery helping patients at PMC

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POCATELLO - Reduced pain, a short recovery, and 20 years of durability are only some of the benefits of a new knee surgery being performed.

Doctors at Portneuf Medical Center have just started using this new knee system, and so far the results are outstanding.

For about a year, Chris Yost dealt with constant knee pain. "Every step hurt," said Yost.

But now Yost, who happens to be a retired pediatrician, can do almost anything he wants. Yost said, "I'm feeling great. I'm riding (my horse), I'm ice skating, waiting for the snow to ski."

And he isn't the only one enjoying the results. Dr. Aaron Altenburg, PMC Orthopaedic Surgeon said, "I have one patient who literally has ridden his bike from coast to coast."

The Oxford Unicompartmental Knee System is new to Southeast Idaho.

Compared to a total knee replacement it is much less invasive. "Minimal bone that we take off of the femur. Minimal bone off of the tibia, which is the shin bone," explains Altenburg.

Yost added, "I haven't taken any pain medication since two weeks post-op."

It works by allowing the knee to move on a small bearing.

That allows patients to bend their knees forward and back, plus side-to-side.

They also have smaller scars, and usually spend just one day in the hospital instead of three. Yost said, "I'm 65. I'm not the youngest person around, but I still want to do a lot of things."

But the device isn't for everyone.

If you have wide-spread arthritis in your knee it probably won't work.

At least not yet. Altenburg said, "We're finding more and more people are good candidates because the results are so good."

More than 500 people with the new knee system have been studied for 20 years, and about 92% of them have not needed to have anything replaced.