

Treatment options for joint pains expand in NW Houston

By **SATARA WILLIAMS**

Updated: 08.30.10

Robert Haynie, a resident of Cypress, has suffered from knee pains off and on since high school. However, it wasn't until three years ago that he began to have moderate to severe pain in his joints. The cartilage surrounding his knees was deteriorating at such a rate that even walking became a daily struggle, he said.

"A long period of time on my feet was not an option," the scoutmaster said. "I couldn't take my scouts on a hike because I couldn't walk without needing to rest on my knees."

Approximately half of American adults are at risk of showing signs of osteoarthritis in at least one knee by the age 85, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Many surgeons are opting to use partial patient-specific knee implants, an innovative treatment option for restoring joints. During the procedure, small incisions are made at the patient's knees, abnormal tissues are removed and the designed implant is inserted. The process, which takes about an hour, is an alternative to total knee replacement.

"What's unique about this procedure is that the implants we use are customized to the person. I tell my patients it's like buying a pair of shoes," Dr. David Mack, an orthopedic surgeon who practices at the North Cypress Medical Center as well as the Methodist Willowbrook Hospital, said. "Sometimes you get something that fits. Some shoes are too small because you may need a half size, but you know this implant will fit because it's made just for you."

Possible candidates for the procedure are those with arthritis confined to only one side of the knee. Haynie, who underwent the operation in April, said the implant was the most suitable method for his condition.

"The cartilage on the outside of my knees was intact but the inside of my joints was deteriorated. Why fix something if it's not broken?" he said. "This was a minimally invasive option than full knee replacement. It's something that allows you alleviate the problem."

A slight amount of swelling may result after the surgery. However, in a matter of two weeks, some patients have been able to walk without the assistance of a cane, according to Mack.

Haynie has only undergone surgery for his left knee; however, it has already made a world of difference in his day to day activities, he said.

"My quality of life and moving around compared to before is like night and day. I'm back to being able to do things I use to do," he said.