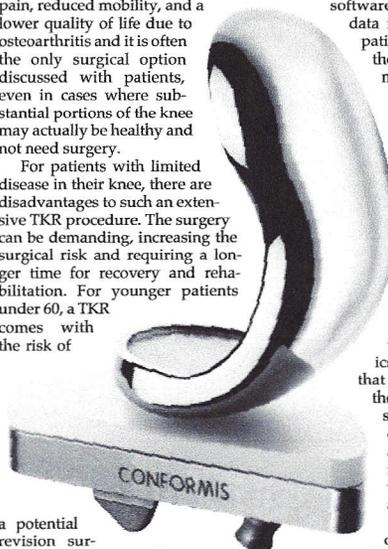


## New tech, implants create an alternative to knee replacements

By Dr. Craig Loucks, MD  
Every year more than 500,000 patients with knee osteoarthritis undergo total knee replacement (TKR), one of the most common surgeries performed in the United States (according to American Association of Orthopedic Surgeons). Over the past three decades, the TKR has become the standard treatment option for patients suffering from knee pain, reduced mobility, and a lower quality of life due to osteoarthritis and it is often the only surgical option discussed with patients, even in cases where substantial portions of the knee may actually be healthy and not need surgery.

For patients with limited disease in their knee, there are disadvantages to such an extensive TKR procedure. The surgery can be demanding, increasing the surgical risk and requiring a longer time for recovery and rehabilitation. For younger patients under 60, a TKR comes with the risk of



a potential revision surgery later in life that can

be complicated by the amount of bone resection that has already been performed.

Physicians, including myself, have begun using a partial knee resurfacing system (developed by an orthopedics company, ConforMIS) that uses a patient's own CT scan data to custom manufacture an implant for each patient. The manufacturer uses Computer Aided Design (CAD) software to convert CT scan data into a 3D model of the patient's anatomy, and then they design an implant and matching cutting guides based on the individual's anatomy.

From my own experience in using this system, the patient-specific approach has enabled me to treat a patient's diseased joint using a resurfacing approach that minimizes the bone resection, allows me to preserve the ACL & PCL, and maintains their natural kinematics. It is also worth noting that the instruments used for the procedure consist of a small set of single use, disposable guides that are designed and manufactured to only work with the specific patient and implants.

During the summer of 2009, Denver's own Linda Cains made an

## Cyndeth Allison Denver Notions



Every once in a while, on dusty summer days, my brother and I would scrounge around the basement, in the chicken coop, along the railroad tracks (soon to be light rail right-of-way), until we came up with enough pop bottles to fill his red Radio Flyer. We'd haul them a few blocks to the back door of Kincaid's Pharmacy at Colfax and Salsbury, where we'd turn them into cold, hard cash. We didn't think recycling was PC, just practical.

### ANTI DEPRESSANT

Coins in hand, we'd pass into the cool of the store. Charles would head straight for the twirling wire rack of comics at the front. I'd dawdle in the stationery and school supplies, looking at each kind of pen, fondling different types of notebooks. Then I'd hook by the cosmetics counter in the center, to smell all the perfume testers. When I was old enough, and had a little more money, my first bottle of toilet water - Tweed, the scent was called - came from that counter.

Kincaid's was, in some ways, the center of our suburb-bansprawl of a neighborhood. It wasn't a big store but it felt spacious because the front of the store had glass display counters, and the stacks at the back were no more than four feet high. The aisles were wide enough, the wares not overcrowded.

No, you couldn't buy bread or socks or toys. But people went there to pay their utility bills, or to buy cough medicine and actually consult with the pharmacist. There were those twirling racks of comics - Tom and Jerry, and Mighty Mouse for the youngsters, action heroes for the older kids. The other side of the store had magazines, and, if a guy was brave enough, he could ask the pharmacist for Playboy, kept behind the drug counter.

Sitting at their turquoise and grey fountain, I drank my first cherry coke and my first root beer float. I didn't like the former much, but the latter is still one of my favorites. Across the aisle they had penny candy. Sometimes we'd spend our pop-bottle money on Neccos, or those awful wax bottles full of sugar water.

I have a vague picture in my mind of the pharmacist as a man in late middle age, thin and tall. The front register was always manned by a woman of about the same age - I'll bet they were the Kincaids themselves. They didn't know us by name, but they did know us as neighborhood kids. They always let us read comic books as long as we bought one. There were no signs about the number of un-escorted kids allowed at any one time.

These days I find myself doing a lot of shopping at my Walgreens just because I'm there. But I don't enjoy the experience. I never feel like just cruising the aisles. Maybe that's because I'm a busy adult, not a kid on vacation. Maybe it's about the ambience.

Today's drug stores all seem to be jam-packed with every conceivable type of merchandise, shelves way over your head, aisles cramped, making them feel dark, even if they aren't. The pharmacists are far too overworked to discuss your drugs with you.

While I'm waiting in line to pick up my prescription, I sometimes think of that little store. The thought is as uplifting as anything they have behind the counter.

appointment to see me to discuss her osteoarthritis. She had been experiencing pain in her left knee, for the past ten years, which became so painful that she was unable to play with her two young grandchildren. Linda decided to have the partial knee resurfacing surgery proving to be a decision that has completely changed her life. Just two weeks after her surgery, Linda was back at work and is now able to play with her grandchildren as well as go hiking and sledding without any pain.

In Linda's case, a patient-specific partial knee procedure was the ideal solution for her, as only part of her knee had osteoarthritic damage. Using this implant, I was able to preserve her healthy bone and cartilage, which not only limited the invasiveness of the surgery but resulted in a fast recovery and the restoration of mobility in her knee.

This technology has enabled Linda to get back to her active lifestyle and to stay in-step with her grandchildren without being in pain.

There are many people who are experiencing what Linda went through. When dealing with knee pain, it is important to know that there are options available that can be less invasive and offer a more personalized approach.

When meeting with your physician, consider discussing your options for patient-specific partial knee procedures.

Reach Dr. Loucks at Peak Orthopedics and Spine, Centennial, CO

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