



Orthopedic Surgery Q&A

Orthopedic surgery is one of the fastest growing types of surgery at St. Clair Hospital and at hospitals across the nation.

As people live longer and are more active, conditions with the musculoskeletal system can increase. Modern surgical techniques help patients restore range of motion, ease pain and return to normal activities.

HouseCall consulted with three of the Hospital's distinguished orthopedic surgeons – Jon B. Tucker, M.D., John M. Gibbons, M.D., and Derrick J. Fluhme, M.D. – to learn more about the world of orthopedics at St. Clair.

HouseCall: What are some of the most common orthopedic procedures being performed at St. Clair Hospital?

Dr. Gibbons: Arthroscopy, joint replacement and fracture care. The orthopedic department takes care of a wide range of musculoskeletal conditions. We care for the whole family, from the child who falls off a swingset to the grandmother who falls in the kitchen. We care for highly conditioned athletes and aging athletes who are striving to stay active. For patients suffering from arthritis, we perform a large number of joint replacements, often using newer, less invasive techniques.

Dr. Fluhme: Arthroscopic surgery of the shoulder and knee. And total joint replacements of the hip and knee.

HouseCall: Why should patients elect to have their orthopedic surgery at St. Clair?

Dr. Tucker: St. Clair Hospital and its orthopedic surgeons represent one of the largest and most talented pools of joint reconstruction specialists in the state. The surgeons who make St. Clair their primary location for elective work are experts in repair of shoulder ligament and rotator cuff injuries, advanced soft tissue reconstruction for prior failed shoulder surgeries, including shoulder joint replacement, and reversed total shoulder replacements. The surgeons also have expertise and depth of talent in total hip replacements and all types of knee replacement, including minimal incision total knee replacement and minimally invasive Oxford™ partial knee replacement. What is also key is hiring, training and retaining the best possible clinical staff,

replacement services over the last five years. And there has been an increased use of alternative high-tech implant materials that have greater promise to extend the life of knee and hip implants.

HouseCall: How do these new techniques and changes benefit patients?

Dr. Fluhme: Arthroscopic surgery equals less discomfort, earlier mobility and the potential for quicker recovery and a return to function, including sports.

Dr. Gibbons: We are able to achieve results that are reproducible and consistent. Some of the newer techniques and implants allow patients to recover faster, function at a higher level, or minimize the chances of running into a complication.

HouseCall: Why is it important for orthopedic patients to undergo a pre-surgery class?

Dr. Tucker: Pre-surgery orientation classes are vital. The classes help reduce anxiety about the surgery. It's important that planning for major joint reconstructive surgery involve patients and their immediate families. It gives them a chance, prior to surgery, to select and arrange for post-hospital care, such as rehabilitation and physical therapy and home care providers, all of which are important to a rapid recovery.

Dr. Fluhme: The best patient upon which to operate is an informed patient. The surgery is only half of the issue. The patient must be prepared for post-operative rehabilitation, which is critical to the success of both simple and complex orthopedic procedures.

Dr. Gibbons: In addition to easing some of the apprehension associated with surgery, the classes help patients learn some exercises to prepare for surgery and some tips on preparing the home for their return. They also give patients the opportunity to ask all of the detailed questions that they did not have the opportunity to have answered in their surgeons' offices. Patients find these classes to be extremely helpful.



including nurses, operating room technicians and program managers to ensure and promote the highest quality patient care.

HouseCall: What are the latest trends in orthopedic surgery?

Dr. Fluhme: For the shoulder, it is rotator cuff and labral repairs. For the knee, it is refining ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament) tissue reconstruction. And all of these are performed arthroscopically. As for joint reconstruction, the trend is alternative bearing surfaces such as ceramics, metal implants and plastics, which extend prosthesis longevity.

Dr. Tucker: St. Clair is committed to adopting innovative new procedures and our surgeons can properly identify patients who will benefit from a new trend.

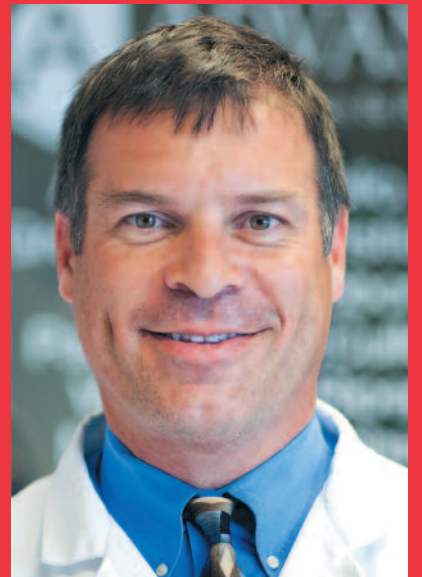
HouseCall: What are some of the biggest changes you have seen in orthopedic surgery over the last five years?

Dr. Gibbons: Over the last five years we have seen improvements in materials, design and manufacturing of knee and hip replacement implants. Alternative bearings have become standard for many young active patients undergoing joint replacement. Less invasive techniques and options have become more commonplace. There also have been significant advances in techniques for repairing fractures. More fractures can be stabilized through surgery to allow early motion of the joint and speed the recovery process.

Dr. Tucker: We are committed to standardized hospital treatment protocols that reduce medical errors and complications and keep infections to a minimal level. There also have been major changes in joint replacement and the demand for joint

JOHN M. GIBBONS, M. D.

Dr. Gibbons holds bachelor's and master's degrees, respectively, from Harvard University and University of Massachusetts. He earned his medical degree at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, New York City. Dr. Gibbons completed an internship in general surgery and a residency in Orthopedic Surgery at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, New York City. His professional training also includes a fellowship in Knee Reconstruction and Sports Medicine at Insall Scott Kelly Institute, Beth Israel Medical Center-North, New York City. Dr. Gibbons is board-certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery.



DERRICK J. FLUHME, M. D.

Dr. Fluhme earned bachelor's and master's degrees, respectively, from the University of Notre Dame and Georgetown University School of Medicine. He was awarded his medical degree from Georgetown University School of Medicine. He completed his internship and residency at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Department of Orthopedic Surgery, and a fellowship at Kerlan-Jobe Orthopedic Clinic, Department of Sports Medicine, Los Angeles. Dr. Fluhme is a former Fellow Team Physician with the Los Angeles Lakers, Dodgers, Kings and Sparks. He is board-certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery.



JON B. TUCKER, M. D.

Dr. Tucker holds an A.B. degree from Duke University in North Carolina. He earned his medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. He completed his internship in general surgery, residency in Orthopedic Surgery and a fellowship in Sports Medicine at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Tucker has served as Team Physician, United States Maccabiah Delegation, 14th World Games in Israel. He is board-certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery.

