

Connecticut Orthopedic Update

June 2002 • An Independent Orthopedic & Sports Medicine Newsletter for Physicians and Others

Early Fractures Clue In Doctors

Women who sustain fractures between the ages of 20 and 50 have an 83% increased fracture risk after 50, according to a new study published in *Orthopedics Today*. Physicians recommend patients who sustained fractures between 20 and 50 be "red flagged" for densitometry and therapeutic intervention to prevent fractures. New Zealand researchers found fractures in those under 20 were not predictive of later fractures.

ACL Injury Prevention Essential

Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) injuries affect 80,000 each year, striking patients mostly ages 15-25. But while people tend to associate this injury with contact sports, 70 percent of ACL injuries occur in sports during noncontact situations, such as when a patient is pivoting on one foot or landing from a jump. *The Journal of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons* recommends identification of risk factors and development of prevention programs to reduce injury risk. Risk factors include environmental (equipment, shoe-surface interaction), anatomy (knee & hip angle), hormonal (estrogen and menstrual cycle shifts), and biomechanical (skill level, muscle strength).

If The Shoe Fits...

According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, the best time to shop for new shoes is at the end of the day, when feet are the largest. Properly fitting athletic shoes allow patients to freely wiggle all toes and be comfortable as soon as they are tried on. Physicians recommend shoes provide a firm grip on the heel and should not slip as the patient walks or runs.

Surgery Improves Quality Of Life

Rotator cuff surgery not only restores shoulder function and decreases pain, but improves the patient's general health overall, according to a study in *The Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*. Researchers followed sixty-seven rotator cuff surgery patients at six-month intervals for two years and found that prior to surgery patients reported "significant impairment of upper

extremity function." Researchers found that surgery had a "definite and measurable effect on the outcome of the shoulder as well as on the quality of the patient's life."

Knee Responds To New Treatment

Patients suffering from osteoarthritis of the knee may have more and longer pain relief thanks to Synvisc, an alternative to corticosteroid injections. Researchers at the Univ. of Washington found patients treated with Synvisc reported an efficacy rate twice that of steroid patients. Synvisc-treated patients showed an average improvement of about 30% versus 17% in the steroid-treatment patients at six months, according to *Orthopedic Technology Review*.

Pain In The Back Warrants MD Call

Assessing back problems can be tricky, especially since four out of five people complain of low back pain. But patients should know that if back pain is the result of a fall or a blow to the back, they need to call their doctor right away. The most common symptom of a herniated disk is sciatica, a sharp, shooting pain from the buttocks down the back of one leg. Other symptoms patients need to report to their doctor include tingling or numbness in one leg, loss of bladder or bowel control, or a burning pain centered in the back.

Toe Fractures Call For Attention Too

While pain, swelling, and sometimes bruising are the most common signs of a toe fracture, many people think doing nothing is the best approach. According to specialists at the Danbury Foot & Ankle Center, if pain, swelling, and discoloration continue for more than two or three days, or if pain interferes with walking, something could be seriously wrong and patients should see a doctor as soon as possible.

Zeroing In On Hip Problems Early

The earlier the better for the diagnosis of dislocation of the hip (developmental dysplasia) in infants, say experts. One out of 1,000 children is born with a dislocated hip, and 10 in 1,000 children are born with hip subluxation, or partial dislocation, or dysplasia. 80% of these children are female.

Connecticut Orthopedic Update is published by Connecticut Family Orthopedics, 33 Hospital Ave., Danbury, CT. Comments or suggestions for future editions may be sent to Gabe Carubia, practice administrator, who may be reached at 203-792-5558; via email at ct.fmyl.orthopdcs@snet.net; or via fax at 203-731-3213.