



Back to Life

Physical therapy helps joint replacement patients return to doing what they love

Last summer, Barbara Kevan's knee pain had become so severe that she found it difficult to stand or walk — much less keep up with her 11 grandchildren. That is when the 70-year-old former high school English teacher knew it was time for a knee replacement. She also knew she wanted to have surgery and complete her

rehabilitation at Southeast Georgia Health System. “I wanted to have surgery and physical therapy locally, so I chose the Health System. I just felt like it was home and that was really important for me,” she says. “The joint replacement class, along with all the staff, fully prepared me so that I knew what to expect throughout the experience. It made me comfortable with my decision to stay close to home.”



Jeffrey A. Zawislak, MPT

One Team, Focused on You

For Health System joint replacement patients, the process begins with “A Joint Journey,” a pre-operative class that helps them prepare for everything, from organization tips to make their home safe and comfortable following surgery, to what to expect immediately after the procedure, as well as their recovery. Once the surgery is complete, the next phase of the journey begins — the rehabilitation process — and it is very much a team effort.

“The rehabilitation services team has decades of combined expertise that they employ in one-on-one sessions tailored to each patient’s specific needs and goals,” says Jeffrey A. Zawislak, MPT, manager/physical therapist, Rehabilitation Care Center, Camden Campus. “The patient’s progress is monitored and communicated daily between the physician, nursing staff, and the physical and occupational therapists.”

Help with Every Step

Physical therapy actually begins on the day of surgery and progresses daily while the patient is in the hospital (usually two to three days). After that, joint replacement patients

typically attend outpatient therapy three times per week with a therapist and do home exercises in between.

“A patient can go through the entire joint replacement experience at the Camden Campus. They can have their pre-op class and surgery at the hospital, and then return for their outpatient physical therapy,” says Zawislak.

“We can relieve their joint pain and get them on the road back to normal activity,” says Gary M. McClain, M.D., board-certified orthopaedic surgeon, Summit Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery, a strategic affiliate of the Health System. But he says that the future of therapy is moving toward a “pre-habilitation” model, where patients are evaluated and begin their therapy before they undergo surgery.

“Many patients are deconditioned before surgery because they have had to modify their physical activity due to arthritis,” he says. “A pre-hab model can help them get invested in their rehabilitation really early on to help them make faster progress.”

Doing Swimmingly

Before her surgery, Mrs. Kevan attended water aerobics classes four days per week. The activity was easy on her joints and helped strengthen her quadriceps, which was helpful in her recovery. As part of her outpatient physical therapy, she spent more time in the water via the Health System’s aquatic therapy program at the Diver’s Den Georgia in St. Marys.

“One of my therapists from the Health System was in the water with me every Tuesday and Thursday, and that was wonderful,” she says. “To be able to do the kind of rehabilitation I wanted, at the places I wanted, made a big difference for me.”

Her results speak for themselves. By Thanksgiving, Mrs. Kevan was able to play basketball with her grandson, and at Christmas, she was bouncing on a trampoline with her other grandchildren. ●



Gary M. McClain, M.D., and Barbara Kevan

Moving Forward

Southeast Georgia Health System offers comprehensive rehabilitation therapy services for patients on an inpatient and outpatient basis, including:

- Aquatic therapy
- Arthritis exercise program
- Ergonomics
- Lymphedema program
- Occupational therapy
- Pediatric rehabilitation
- Physical therapy
- Speech therapy
- Sports Medicine
- Women's health services, including pelvic floor rehabilitation

Rehabilitation Services are offered at four convenient locations:

Brunswick Campus

2600 Wildwood Drive
Brunswick

912-466-5330

Monday–Friday: 7 a.m.–6 p.m.

Summit Professional Plaza

1111 Glynco Parkway, Suite 110
Brunswick

912-264-5377

Monday–Friday: 8 a.m.–6 p.m.

Wellness Way Medical Office Complex

6000 Wellness Way
St. Simons Island

912-466-5330

Monday–Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Camden Campus

2000 Dan Proctor Drive
St. Marys

912-576-6450

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday: 7 a.m.–7 p.m.

Wednesday and Friday: 7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Visit sghs.org/rehab to learn more about rehabilitation services.