

UM Orthopaedic Specialists Launch New Center Dedicated to Adult Reconstruction of the Hip and Knee

Osteoarthritis is a major health issue for U.S. adults. The common degenerative disease is especially prevalent in Florida, where more than one in five residents is 65 years or older, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Many with osteoarthritis eventually seek joint replacement surgery, most commonly of the hip or knee, to relieve pain, restore movement and improve quality of life. As a result, the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine's most experienced joint replacement experts have launched the Orthopaedics Adult Joint Reconstruction Clinic, a facility devoted to hip and knee joint reconstruction surgery, according to Victor Hugo Hernandez, M.D., M.S., associate professor and chief of the Joint Replacement Division in the Department of Orthopaedics at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.



Dr. Victor Hugo Hernandez

“Establishing a dedicated joint reconstruction center is a relatively new concept in South Florida,” said Dr. Hernandez. “This center reflects the evolution of joint care in the field of orthopaedics.”

The clinic’s surgeons specialize in different advanced knee and hip surgery options aimed at improving outcomes, speeding recovery, and eliminating overnight hospital stays.

“These patients used to stay in the hospital for two to five days. Over the last two years, we have changed that paradigm by incorporating rapid recovery protocols that make it safe for patients to go home within 24 hours after surgery,” said Dr. Hernandez. “Today, nearly 80 percent of our partial or total joint replacement surgeries are performed in an outpatient setting.”

The minimally invasive approach for anterior and posterior hip joint replacement involves making a small incision between the hip muscles that avoids detaching the muscles. This can significantly reduce recovery times.

Patients' recovery times have been reduced to one to three months – a significant difference from the traditional six months to a year – and include the use of telemedicine and wearable technology that allows physicians to monitor the patient in real time, also reducing the need for outpatient and inpatient rehabilitation.

The surgical approach is just one of the ways Dr. Hernandez and his colleagues ensure that patients can resume normal activities as quickly as possible.

“We also utilize multi-modal pain management and patient-specific protocols. For example, if we have patients with medical risk factors, we use risk-stratification protocols to identify and decrease complications and readmissions,” Dr. Hernandez said.

The Orthopaedics Adult Joint Reconstruction Clinic also offers non-surgical care for patients who are not yet candidates for total joint replacement. Options for many of these patients range from different injections to physical therapy and activity modifications, according to Dr. Hernandez.

“Our spectrum of services ranges from simple to complex,” he said. “We have evidence-based protocols for everything we do. We participate in the American Joint Replacement Registry and constantly compare our data, including complications and readmissions, to other joint replacement facilities around the

U.S. to ensure that our outcomes exceed national benchmarks.”

Joining Dr. Hernandez in the Orthopaedics Adult Joint Reconstruction Clinic are Raymond P. Robinson, M.D., professor of clinical orthopaedics; Jaime Alberto Carvajal Alba, M.D., assistant professor of clinical orthopaedics; Michele R. D’Apuzzo, M.D., associate professor of clinical orthopaedics; and Fernando E. Vilella-Hernandez, M.D., assistant professor of clinical orthopaedics.

As part of a multidisciplinary approach to care, University of Miami Sports Medicine Institute specialist Michael Baraga, M.D., associate professor of orthopaedics, will also join the center this year to provide knee preservation surgical management such as cartilage restoration procedures and osteotomies for patients who do not yet need a partial or total knee replacement.

Endocrinologist Rodrigo Valderrabano, M.D., an assistant professor of clinical endocrinology at the Miller School of Medicine, will establish the *Own the Bone* center, which will diagnose, treat, and optimize patients with hip fractures and osteoporosis.

The Orthopaedics Adult Joint Reconstruction Clinic is located in the UHealth Tower West Building, 3rd Floor, Suite 306. For more information, call 305-689-5195.

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