

For a Healthier You...

We're here for you in times of need

It was about a year ago, when Mark McCance's life took a detour. Always active and physically fit, Mark was playing softball and running the bases when all of a sudden first one knee, then the other popped and "down I went. I looked down and my kneecaps weren't where they were supposed to be. I had severed both patellar tendons, the tendon that holds your kneecap in place."



Westfields Hospital Physical Therapist Gwen Hop and Dr. Nicholas Weiss, MD, St. Croix Orthopaedics provided care for Mark McCance (center) following a sports injury to his knees.

"I came to Westfields

Hospital by ambulance on a Sunday night to the emergency department. After some discussion of a possible transfer to another hospital, it was our family's wish to stay at Westfields Hospital and prepare to have orthopaedic surgery right here. The coordination of care from ER, to inpatient, to home care, to outpatient therapy was all well done. Being close to home and having convenient access to the care I needed meant a lot to me and my family," says McCance.

Dr. Nicholas Weiss, orthopaedic surgeon with St. Croix Orthopaedics performed surgery to reattach the patellar tendon in both knees the following Tuesday at Westfields Hospital. "This is an extremely rare case, to have both knees affected at the same time," says Dr. Weiss.

Gwen Hop, Physical Therapist at Westfields Hospital, worked with Dr. Weiss following surgery to develop an overall program of rehabilitation to get Mark back to his normal lifestyle.

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“Mark was a model patient,” says Hop. “He was always positive and ready to work hard. If anything we had to hold him back and tell him not to push too hard. He was fortunate in that he was in great physical shape before the injury. He had a lot of upper body strength which really helped his recovery.”

“A person takes their mobility for granted,” says McCance. “After a few days as an inpatient, I was discharged to home in a wheelchair and wearing two long-leg immobilizers.” Home health care was provided by ADORAY Home Health. Hop made recommendations on how to modify their multi-level home for wheelchair access and their living areas so Mark could function. “Right from the start, I began working on my upper body strength, doing exercises in bed, so I could assist myself as much as possible and transfer from the bed to the wheelchair and so on,” says McCance.

After about eight weeks of physical therapy at home three times a week, Mark was ready to come to the physical therapy department at the hospital as an outpatient to receive continued therapy. “A big moment for me was the day I came to my physical therapy session in the wheelchair and walked out with my braces. I said, “Finally, come on, let’s walk!”

Hop says, “We kept working on lower extremity and core muscle strengthening. He progressed from a wheelchair, to a walker, a cane and then to walking without support. The final phase of our outpatient care was to provide Mark with a program he could continue on his own at the YMCA.”

“Part of the rehabilitation is ‘mental’, pushing past where you were before. If I had any advice for anyone else going through this kind of rehabilitation, it would be to work hard, move on and be positive, BUT listen to your therapist. They will get you there safely. Through it all I never had any set backs. I had excruciating pain when the injury occurred, but throughout the whole recovery process I had very little pain.”

Mark is still faithfully doing his therapy a year later. “I’d say I have full range of motion, but I’m at 85 percent of ‘Mark’s personal best.’ I still need to build muscle strength. The last thing to come is the explosive movements—quick changes of position from standing. Most people don’t think about making a quick move. I still need to think it through.”

“I’m confident that I’ll get there. Everyday is getting better. Now I’m running. My goal is to get back out skiing this winter. I expect after 15 - 18 months of therapy, I will be completely recovered and back to ‘Mark’s personal best.’”

Knee rehabilitation following injury or surgery

When it comes to recovery from knee injury, or rehabilitation following knee surgery, Westfields Hospital Physical Therapy department offers a full range of services to get you back on your feet again.

We coordinate care with your physician to develop a program to meet your individual needs. To find out more about Physical Therapy services from Westfields Hospital contact 715-243-7255.