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Contact: Christopher Miller
Media Relations
414- 385-2362

LOCAL DOCTOR PROVIDES NEW RELIEF FOR KNEE PAIN Minimally Invasive Procedure for Arthritis May Delay Knee Replacement Surgery

MILWAUKEE, Wis., May 20, 2002 -- Dr. Christopher Evanich is one of a select group of surgeons nationwide, and currently among only a handful of doctors in Wisconsin, to perform a new type of knee surgery that could help patients who suffer from debilitating arthritis stay active.

For patients with the proper indications, Dr. Evanich inserts a small kidney-shaped device called the UniSpacer™ Knee System in the knee joint to replace damaged cartilage and help restore alignment. The UniSpacer stays in place without cement or screws and follows the normal motion of each individual's knee.



“This is a completely new approach to treating early-stage osteoarthritis of the knee,” said Dr. Evanich, orthopedic surgeon at St. Luke's Medical Center and West Allis Memorial Hospital. “The UniSpacer is a promising new alternative for people who are not getting the pain relief they need from pain medications or arthroscopic procedures.”

Traditionally, the primary long-term solution for patients with severe knee pain was knee replacement surgery, in which the surgeon replaces the damaged knee with an artificial implant. Surgeons are generally reluctant to perform replacement surgery on younger, more active patients because of the irreversible removal of bone required.

New Relief for New Pain/Add one

The UniSpacer is innovative because it is a minimally invasive device that integrates with the natural bone structure. Because the UniSpacer does not require fixation or bone cuts, it does not compromise future conversion to total knee replacement.

“This device can help relieve pain and get patients back on their feet,” said Dr. Evanich. “Best of all, patients retain their natural anatomy.”

The procedure is conducted under general or regional anesthesia and generally takes about one hour to complete. Most patients are able to return to normal activities within a few months.

For more information on the UniSpacer or to make an appointment with Dr. Evanich, please call 414-643-8800.

The UniSpacer was cleared for use in the U.S. and is only available through a small group of specially trained surgeons.

UniSpacer is a trademark of Sulzer Orthopedics Inc.

St. Luke's Medical Center and West Allis Memorial Hospital are part of Aurora Health Care, a community-owned Wisconsin health care provider and a nationally recognized leader in efforts to improve the quality of health care. Aurora has care sites in 65 communities in eastern Wisconsin.

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