

TRANSCRIPT-Total ankle replacement: The life-changing surgery you probably haven't heard of

Bryce Paschold, DPM, a foot and ankle surgeon for OSF HealthCare/OrthoMidwest

The surgery today requires less invasive bone removal, and outcomes are dramatically better than previously.

"We put a poly [ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene] in between there [the replacement joint], and that's the thing that allows for the motion between the joint," Dr. Paschold explains. "So, basically we're resecting out bone from both sides of the joint, which is getting rid of the arthritis, to preserve motion." (:18)

Dr. Paschold tries more conservative approaches first.

"You want to do all those things first, for sure, because some people can do ok with just that. But once you get through all that and the pain is still too severe. It shouldn't be debilitating. It shouldn't be life-altering. You don't want to live life like this. Then surgery is a great option for the right patient." (:19)

The surgery will require a hospital stay.

"People will stay overnight one or two nights, typically just for pain control and for physical therapy so we can see them and get them kind of moving. Make sure they can get around safely without putting weight on the operative ankle side." (:15)

Dr. Paschold says his patients do feel immediate relief, even if full recovery takes a while.

"Right away, most people are happier just because they have less pain. But the people I've done this one on, once they get through everything, they're really happy because they can function and they can walk and go to the grocery store, go shopping without the pain that kept them down before. So they're happy they can function and do daily living activities and feel like a normal person again." (:27)