



Joint replacement procedures are subject of ongoing debate

Deirdre Cox Baker | The Quad-City Times | Posted: Friday, December 5, 2008 | 12:00 am

Joint replacement is a subject of debate among orthopedists around the country.

One way, now in use at the Mississippi Valley Surgical Center in Davenport, emphasizes quick recovery time after a hip operation. Patients often are up and walking three to four hours after the joint is replaced, proponents say.

On the other side of the discussion is a more traditional approach that includes a hospital stay of two to four days. That approach is embraced by Orthopaedic and Rheumatology Associates, P.C., of Davenport.

The go-slower approach focuses on preventing risks from infection.

“At least two studies over the past two years have suggested that hip or knee replacement on an outpatient basis may not be the best option for everyone because of possible serious complications in the first 48 hours following surgery,” said Dr. Joseph Martin of Orthopaedic and Rheumatology Associates. Patients who have such complications after outpatient surgery would not be in a hospital setting where problems could be quickly identified and treated, he added.

“One conclusion that can be drawn from these recent studies is that it may be advantageous to have your minimally invasive joint replacement surgery in a hospital setting, where resources are immediately available to turn a potentially life-threatening complication into a minor event,” he said.

Numerous requests for comment on the two approaches were declined by orthopedists at University Hospitals in Iowa City, the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., and the American Orthopedic Association.