



Labor Day and Senior Health

by Joe Steckler
President, Helping Seniors of Brevard

We recently celebrated Labor Day, the perfect time to appreciate the labor and union movements that have brought this great nation of ours to the leadership position it enjoys today. Personally, I am reminded of the growth of the medical profession and its ability to help people. In particular, I would like to discuss my recent knee replacement, as it is especially pertinent to older people.

For many years I tried almost every treatment known to man to delay or prevent knee replacements. With every advancing treatment I knew that my "pain management journey" was soon coming to an end. Since I had to be transported everywhere, I knew that if I wanted to walk I had to face the inevitable – replace the knees.

Having made my decision, I was catapulted into a different part of the medical field, elective but necessary surgery. My next step was to pick a surgeon. Flooded by advice from friends, I finally looked one doctor in the eye and asked, "Who would you use?" I got the answer and today am happy with my choice. Then I had to get blood tests, which turned up new 86-year-old problems that had been lurking awhile despite my best attempts to follow a good health regimen.

Once these hurdles were past, I was operated on and faced the inevitable pain. By now I have the discomfort and swelling in hand and can see the light at the end of the tunnel. However, I have one more knee to replace and am building the will to get that done, especially if I am to get back out promoting Helping Seniors and our car raffle. Here I might add that while I have the help I need, Helping Seniors serves those who do not have help, so your support of our major fundraiser will be most appreciated.

Here are some key take-away points from my article:

1. When delaying elective surgery, consider the health implications of doing it at an older age. This is so important in your ability to recover.
2. Conduct research when selecting a surgeon. Listening to friends is good but may not be so in your case. Talk to a doctor you like and ask him or her who they would select.
3. If pain is not under control after surgery, tell your doctor. This happened to me after I returned home and a call to the doctor's office resulted in new medication.

Your active participation in your own health care is vital. Be open with the team you have selected and, if what you were told to expect does not happen, then respectfully let your team know. Doctors can help you, so be honest with them as they work with you.

Now to the second knee operation—while I am not looking forward to it, I am sure thankful for the labor unions that have enabled us to have the effective medical care we enjoy in the U.S.

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