

PHYSICAL MEDICINE CONSULTANTS



Dr. David Stensland performs a caudal epidural on a patient in the new interventional suite at Physical Medicine Consultants. The suite allows the doctors to perform procedures on site, making them much more convenient, faster and less costly for patients.

A “pain in the neck” isn’t just a phrase Mary uses to describe something she doesn’t like to do. For Mary, the actual pain in her neck is a chronic, debilitating burden that has left her frustrated, hopeless and still hurting despite treatment from her family physician, chiropractor, and several specialists. No one, it seems, can unravel the complex core of her hurt and make it go away.

Jack just recovered from a total knee replacement due to arthritis. Now, despite a seemingly successful surgery, his pain is back. Jack fears that feeling better is forever out of reach.

Sarah’s seen her doctor for shooting pain in her abdomen. The initial exam and subsequent GI work up helped her doctor rule out the most common causes, but he’s looking for a specialist to get to the bottom of the problem.

Today, Mary, Jack, Sarah and many others like them have restored their quality of life after being referred to Physical Medicine Consultants—a group of three local doctors who are problem solvers for patients—and other physicians.

Doctors Thomas Lazoff, David Stensland and Mark Zolman are specially trained in physiatry (fizz-eye-ah-tree)—a medical specialty that uses non-surgical treatments for musculoskeletal and neurological problems that cause pain, weakness or numbness.

HANDS ON HEALING

Before the first high-tech test or invasive procedure, these doctors begin with the most basic of tools—their hands and their ears.

In fact, after their experience with PMC, patients remark most about the time and attention they receive in the initial examination. PMC doctors use a true, hands-on exam that focuses on the whole patient. They gather a complete history and look and listen for clues as patients share their stories.

Next, doctors walk the patient through an appropriate path of testing that may include electromyography (EMG), nerve conduction studies (NCS) and diagnostic joint and spinal nerve blocks.

“I tell my patients, God usually gives you more than one problem,” laughs Dr. Lazoff. “Often, we have to look at several things to get someone better. Sometimes a patient comes to us with a diagnosis that nails one problem, but overlooks another. We put the whole thing together and come up with a game plan for treatment.”

In the case of Jack, the knee pain actually originated from a pinched nerve in his back. A combination of anti-inflammatory steroid injections and prescribed physical therapy helped his own body heal the hurt.

As Sarah’s doctor surmised, her stomachache didn’t have

anything to do with her stomach. Issues in her thoracic spine, combined with a pulled muscle between two of her ribs were both mediating pain to her abdomen.

And Mary hopes to never use the phrase “pain in the neck” again—as her PMC physician redirected treatment to focus on a disk herniation first, and then address complications from muscle tightness. Through medications for short-term relief and the right course of therapy, she restored her function and flexibility and is back to her passion of gardening. She has closure and so does her family physician.

TOUCH AND TECHNOLOGY

While X-rays, CT scans and MRIs all provide valuable information to help diagnose defects like disc herniations, Dr. Zolman explains they can also make it easy for doctors to attribute too much or point too quickly to an abnormality seen on an imaging study.

Supplementing these studies with diagnostic and therapeutic injections helps PMC doctors complete the picture and fill in the blanks, especially when several underlying issues combine to muddy the waters.

Statistics show that a majority of people who have pain in the spine, neck or low back will eventually get better on their own. PMC physicians agree. They say roughly 80 percent of people will heal on their own with time. Ten to 15 percent need someone like a physiatrist to help them heal, or speed up the process. And the remaining 5 percent are candidates for surgery.

“We like to share those numbers with patients,” adds Dr. Stensland. “They give people hope and help validate our process which is all about helping someone make the most of their own body’s ability to take care of itself.”



Most PMC patients are surprised by how much time the doctors spend listening and gathering information during their first visit. Dr. Mark Zolman reviews this patient’s history before the physical exam.

ABOUT PMC

Physical Medicine Consultants is the result of three doctors’ desire to work together to make non-surgical, conservative options more accessible to all patients. Doctors Lazoff, Stensland and Zolman specialize in physical medicine and rehabilitation and electrodiagnostic medicine. They take a collaborative approach to ensure the best—most healthful—treatment for all issues relating to the musculoskeletal system including acute and chronic spine pain or trouble with any joints in your body. They have offices in Fort Wayne, Angola and Kendallville and can be reached at (260) 432-1800 or at www.pmcRestore.com.



A patient with ankle pain undergoes an “EMG” with Dr. Thomas Lazoff. This diagnostic tool is one of many commonly used by physiatrists to help pinpoint the source of pain.

SECOND THOUGHTS ON SURGERY

Sometimes surgery is the best or only option to heal a joint or eliminate pain. If it’s not your only option—chances are, it should be your last. Even surgeons agree it’s smart to get a second opinion for anything that’s invasive and irreversible. Here are some things to think about as you weigh your options.

Wait for something better. Just look at your cell phone or laptop to see how quickly technology improves. Medicine is no different. If you can use physical medicine or other conservative measures to buy yourself time, there may be a less invasive more effective procedure just around the corner.

Take your time. It’s true that time (and a little patience) can be your friend. If you can buy some short-term relief through medicine or therapy, your body might get the break it needs to heal.

Consider a comprehensive view. The various systems of our bodies work together in ways that are complicated and still very mysterious. Looking at the whole picture rather than individual parts can sometimes tell a very different story that might provide you with a happier ending.

PHYSICAL MEDICINE CONSULTANTS
Restoring the whole you.

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