

The Outpatient Rehabilitation Department at WCH is conveniently located close to patient parking in a new, bright and spacious gymnasium. The hospital provides thorough evaluations, individual attention, customized treatment plans, and home exercise programs for a wide variety of conditions, including joint injuries, neurological problems such as stroke, spinal cord injuries, arthritic conditions and even speech, language and feeding disorders.

"When people come in to this department they are surprised how nice it is and the array of equipment we have to offer," Layhe said. "Even some people who work here in the hospital don't realize it."

Layhe said the most common injuries she sees are worn out backs and joints.

"We see a lot of agricultural workers—people who are doing manual work that is hard on the spine, a lot of lifting and bending," she said. "Generally with knees and hips, the cartilage just wears out. We can't rebuild that, but we can build the muscles around the joint. We also educate people on joint protection — how to properly lift things and so on."

Layhe said the physical therapy staff are very experienced, and that, combined with the equipment and facility, make for an outstanding care program. There is even Aquatic Physical Therapy, provided in a nearby therapeutic pool.

"There is very good teamwork here," Layhe said. "Our nurses are excellent and our therapists are very, very good. One of our big strengths is the experience of our therapists, people who have great skills, have worked here a long time and really enjoy what they are doing."

Dr. Chris Summa, who specializes in spinal surgeries agreed. "They are really effective. A lot of my surgeries involve sizable reconstruction and patients are in the hospital three to four days," Dr. Summa said. "The therapists increase the patient's mobility and really help them make a quick recovery so they can return home."

In fact, Summa said the staff at WCH are the best thing about performing surgery there. "But should I need new equipment, the hospital has always been extremely supportive in providing

me with whatever I need to do to take care of the patient."

For instance, Dr. Summa said WCH was the first hospital in the county to have a spine surgery-specific table.

Dr. Abidi said being able to help others live a more productive life is hugely rewarding. And while he is able to make a difference in lives every week, it is the patients who have been told they couldn't be helped, that he most enjoys helping.

"There was a woman in her 30s with rheumatoid arthritis. She came to me in a wheelchair, and was supposed to be bound to that chair all her life before I replaced both her ankles," he said. "Well, I was at a conference in Washington D.C. and was at the airport when somebody tugged on my sleeve. It was her, she had walked right up to me. She told me she was finally able to leave her house and show her family around Washington D.C. It was just wonderful."

For more information on health services available at WCH, go online at www.watsonvillehospital.com.

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The Orthopedic Program at WCH



For a
physician referral
please call
831-761-5614

WCH

*"A regional leader in
orthopedic care..."*



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“We’re doing some cutting-edge stuff...”

A regional leader in orthopedic care, Watsonville Community Hospital (WCH) offers a full-range of services, from total joint replacement to outpatient rehabilitation, and has eight orthopedic surgeons to call on for their expertise.

Jane Winning, interim CNO at WCH said that the services the hospital provides rivals much larger institutions.

“We have all the full range of orthopedic cases, both inpatient and outpatient. We do diagnostics, as well as treatment,” she said. “We do total joints—knees, hips, ankles, hands, elbows and shoulders, and we have a very active back and spinal surgery practice.”

Winning said it is the wide experience and knowledge of the surgeons, combined with the latest surgical equipment and rehabilitation methods, that makes the program special.

“Our staff is excellent. We have high standards and achieve those standards consistently. And I think it’s important for patients to know that about WCH,” Winning said. “We pull patients from all over the county. We really try to give personalized care. So that those coming from elsewhere realize this was the best place to go.”

Dr. Edward Bradbury is qualified for all orthopedic procedures, but lately he has been specializing in knee and hip replacements. He said a new operating table at the hospital called a Hanna Table allows orthopedic surgeons to do surgery with little or no cutting, drastically increasing recovery time. Another new procedure called the Oxford Knee is a partial knee replacement where only the inner side of the knee is replaced, also increasing recovery time over a total replacement.

And just last week, Dr. Bradbury performed a Signature Knee replacement, a new method where MRI technology and computerized animation create a custom mold that is used during the surgery so that the knee is perfectly aligned with the hip and ankle.

“We’re doing some cutting-edge stuff at WCH,” Dr. Bradbury said.

Dr. Nicholas Abidi has a fellowship in foot and ankle orthopedics. He says he sees about 150 patients a week and performs 10 to 12 surgeries. He said there are about 20,000 ankle sprains in the United States each day and his patients come from all walks of life.

“I’ve operated on children as young as 4 and patients as old as 105,” Dr. Abidi said. “I have patients from all over the United States coming to see me. WCH is one of just 10 places that can do ankle replacements.”

He said the Hanna Table sets the program apart.

“We’re not cutting muscles, just separating them with our hands,” Dr. Abidi said. “Patients leave the hospital



in about half the time, it saves money and there is better recovery in the short term—and the long term, because everything is aligned more accurately.”

And if surgery can be avoided entirely, so much the better. Part of WCH’s orthopedics program is a state-of-the-art rehabilitation program designed to strengthen the body so that patients can either avoid surgery or recover from it more quickly.

Rehabilitation director Stephanie Layhe says rehab staff see patients after joint surgeries or replacement, but also see people who’ve had an injury or progressive knee pain that is getting worse.

“We try to rehabilitate them before they get to the point of having surgery,” Layhe said.

And if the patients have had surgery, Layhe says she wants to get them moving and active, and back home, as soon as possible. And

with the new methods of surgery being practiced at WCH, Layhe said it is common to get a patient up and walking with assistance the same day they’ve had a knee surgery.

We’re much more progressive. The surgery techniques are much better, so the patients are able to tolerate activity much earlier,” she said. “Years ago, our teachers told us to sit down and keep still, but now we tell people to get up and move.”

“...WCH is one of just 10 places that can do ankle replacements.”