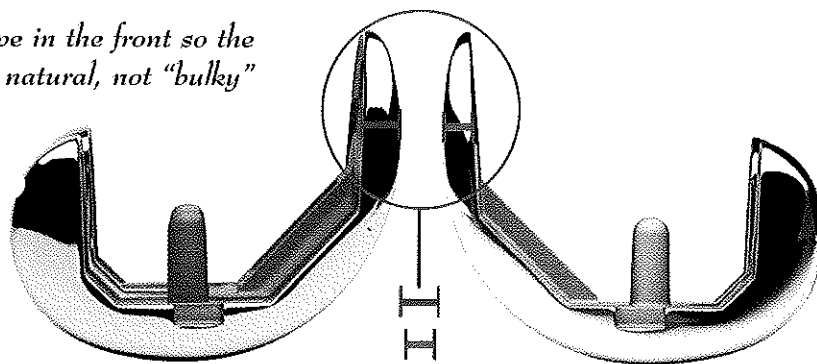


A Knee Replacement Designed Specifically For Women

by R. Stephen Lucie, MD

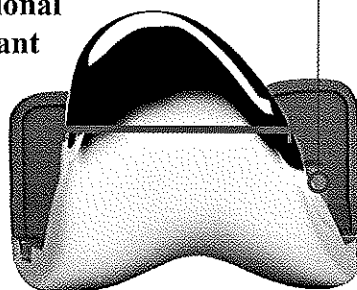
Thinner in shape in the front so the replacement knee feels natural, not "bulky"



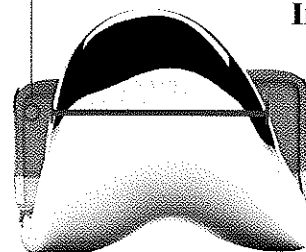
More natural tracking, allowing the implant to move more like a natural knee



Traditional Implant



Female Implant



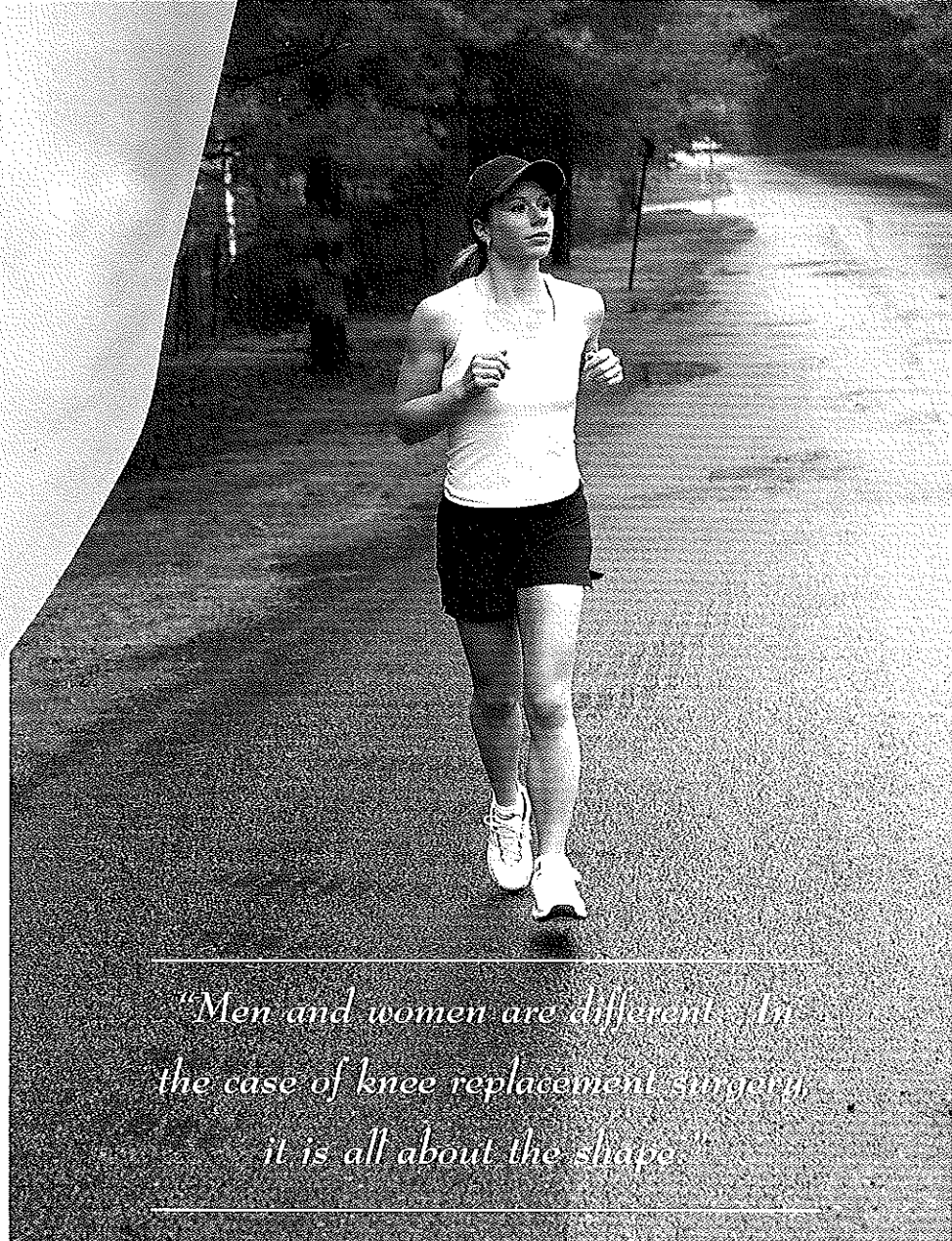
Narrower shape, proportioned to fit a woman's anatomy and to help prevent the implant from overhanging the bone and potentially pressing on, or damaging, surrounding ligaments and tendons.

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Knee pain and knee arthritis are very common problems to many men and women, particularly as they age. The baby boomer generation is now in their 50's and 60's, and total knee replacement is becoming much more common. Nearly two thirds of the more than 400,000 annual knee replacements in the United States are performed on women, and the numbers continue to increase each year. According to a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, "Medicine is not gender neutral. The differences between men and women are turning out to be significant in the diagnosis and the treatment in everything from heart disease

to depression." In fact, 10 years ago the government and the medical community changed the rules for research to include gender-inclusive studies. The results are changing in the way medicine, including orthopaedics, is being practiced.

Men and women are different. In the case of knee replacement surgery, it is all about the shape. Replacement knees have long been available in many sizes, but this does not always resolve anatomic differences typically seen in female patients. The main difference in the women's specific knee is the width of the implant. Women have a slightly narrower



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knee for their size and, therefore, the women's specific knee has taken this into consideration. The knee cap tracks somewhat differently in women. So, the new design specifically for women can accommodate this with a different angle for the knee cap tracking mechanism allowing a more natural bend to the knee. In addition, these are thinner, particularly in the portion of the knee that lies under the knee cap, more accurately simulating a women's anatomy. This new innovation combined with the newer minimally invasive approach, which results in a much smaller scar, can provide a quicker return to normal activities making it an ideal joint replacement for women.

Not all knee pain and arthritis requires a joint replacement. Some painful knee conditions may be treated with medication,

physical therapy, injections, or minimally invasive arthroscopic surgery. However, when the pain and loss of function reaches a point where the patient is limping, walking is severely impaired and the pain both day and night becomes unbearable. At this point, knee replacement may be the best option. Common conditions which may lead to knee replacement include deterioration of the knee joint, osteoarthritis, inflammatory arthritis (such as rheumatoid arthritis), moderate to severe bow-legged knee deformity, or to correct problems caused by previously failed surgery or fractures. Patients should ask their doctor if they are candidates for one of the new women's-specific designed total knees. ■