

Advancements in Orthopedics and Reparative Medicine

An interview with local board certified orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Andrew Spitzfaden, sheds light on **advancements in orthopedics and reparative medicine.**

Missouri is home to many people participating in sporting activities. Whether it's the young athlete participating in high school sports or the adult weekend warrior athlete, more activities yields more injuries.

Thankfully, Dr. Andrew Spitzfaden and the physicians at Woods Mill

Orthopedics are up to date on the advancements in orthopedic care for joint issues ranging from acute sports injuries to chronic conditions such as degenerative joint disease.

"Many patients are suffering from orthopedic pain and are not ready for invasive surgery like a total joint replacement. They are also looking for longer lasting alternatives to cortisone injections. Other non-surgical options often do not provide the best long lasting relief. Many of my patients were becoming frustrated with the duration of relief other non-surgical options were providing."

Dr. Spitzfaden developed an early interest in emerging technologies in orthopedic medicine

Dr. Spitzfaden was born and raised in St. Louis. He attended medical school at the University of Missouri-Columbia and completed



Dr. Andrew Spitzfaden

his orthopedic surgery residency at St. Louis University. He has been in practice for over 12 years and is the team physician for local high school MICDS.

"Cortisone shots are often the "go to" option for arthritis type pain in joints. These shots can be quite effective, but may also be short lived. And they also carry with them risks of side effects (elevated blood sugar, blood pressure control issues, and can be deleterious to the normal joint tissue). We monitor the frequency of cortisone injections in joints because too much can adversely affect the joint's normal tissue (cartilage, tendon). This is why using an individual's own tissue to help them heal is appealing."

"Orthopedic medicine has advanced a ton over last 15 years with regards to reparative medicine. Using an individual's fat is a fascinating concept because we are using one's own tissue to help with healing."

Dr. Andrew Spitzfaden is the first physician in Missouri to use the Lipogems system where a patient's own fat tissue is used to help support the reconstruction, repair, or replacement of damaged or injured tissue. "Most don't realize the power of fat. It's a strange concept, but fat is loaded with reparative cells that can assist with muscle and joint conditions."

The Power of Fat

"Fat has excellent reparative properties and in my experience the harvesting process from patients is much more comfortable in comparison to other cell and tissue harvesting techniques"

Inside of your own fat, there are many different types of cells that are used for healing (including pericytes, adipose derived stem cells, adipocytes, etc). These cells need to stay together to work as a functional unit. Fat is crucial for your health and the reparative cells help to promote a healing environment in response to a tissue injury. It's important to note that your fat maintains the reparative properties, unlike other tissues such as bone marrow, which may lose healing capacity with age.

Simple and Minimally Invasive Procedure

Fat is usually harvested from around the belly area. If more is needed, the love handles can be used. The entire Lipogems procedure usually takes less than an hour and is performed in an office setting using local anesthesia. A tiny puncture through your skin is made and a small section of fat from either your midsection or "love handles" is harvested. The collected fat is then processed in the special Lipogems device using sterile saline solution. This occurs through a very gentle process called micro-fragmentation, during which your fat is washed, rinsed, and resized into smaller clusters while maintaining the natural beneficial properties of your fat. Blood, inflammatory cells, and fatty oils are removed as the desirable remainder of your fat is concentrated. The resulting tissue is injected into the treatment site. The

Lipogems difference is that the cells inside of your own powerful fat stay intact and act harmoniously in the body to repair, restructure, replace to cushion and support the tissue during the repair, replacement, or reconstruction of damaged or injured tissue.

Dr. Spitzfaden states, "My patients say the pain is around a 1-2 on the pain scale and is much easier than getting a cavity filled at the dentist."

"It's always a great thing when patients follow up in my office with the ability to live their lives, especially when other treatments were unsuccessful."

Working Together to Find A Solution That's Right For You

"I chose to include the Lipogems procedure into my practice because as an orthopedic surgeon, I want to offer all treatment options for joint pain. Whether a simple non-surgical option or a total joint replacement, I will do my best to help the patient decide what fits best with their lifestyle and current medical situation."

"I always think it is important to cover all non-surgical options first with my patients. A patient should never be pressured into a total joint surgery. Over the years, I've found that patients really appreciate understanding all of their options when it comes to joint disease. Adding the Lipogems procedure as a treatment option has given patients another choice when it comes to managing their joint and muscle conditions."

Treat the Patient not the X-Ray

"A physician should never meet a patient for the first time, look at their xray and immediately tell them they need a total joint replacement. It's crucial to understand the patient's medical history, activity level, and individual goals of treatment before making a final treatment plan. In other words, treat the entire patient, not just the xray."

Jake C's Personal Story

"Dr. Spitzfaden wasn't my original doctor and I was told I needed a total knee replacement but I wasn't ready for one. I'm a young guy and definitely searching for another option. I met with Dr. Spitzfaden and we discussed my options. The other practices I spoke with discussed options that would be much more expensive — up to \$9,000.

When Dr. Spitzfaden told me about using my own fat to help with my knee symptoms, it actually made sense to me. I was told the procedure was minimally invasive and that everything would be completed in one visit. The cost was much less than the other practices I spoke with.

During the procedure the belly discomfort was minimal (1 out of 10). My recovery was simple and at 8 months out my results are still pretty impressive. I'm thrilled to be back at my normal activity level with minimal discomfort. Overall, I am very impressed and pleased with the Lipogems procedure. Hopefully my results last for a while, but if I need it again in the future, I wouldn't hesitate to do it again."

Jake C. • St. Louis, MO

Avid Golfer & Real Estate Developer



Jake C., Avid Golfer

Is Lipogems procedure right for you?

To learn more about how Dr. Andrew Spitzfaden may help you, please contact 314-576-7013.

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