

Vital Signs

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on Joint
Replacement**
Relief Is Possible

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A publication from



**Bates County
Memorial Hospital**

Don't Wait on Joint Replacement: Relief Is Possible

Jerl Leonard, 87, spent months struggling with hip pain that radiated up his back. After trying other options without relief, his daughter suggested Dr. Jon Blake at Bates County Memorial Hospital. The photos shown were taken just a few weeks after he had hip surgery at BCMH.

“Before surgery, I could hardly walk. Now, I have very little pain, and I’m getting around really well. I hope anyone else who needs it will get it done.”



For Jerl, recovery has progressed steadily.

After surgery, he experienced only a few days of soreness before the pain began to ease. Once his staples were removed and healing was confirmed, he continued building strength through home health visits and physical therapy.

“I still use a walker for now, but I’m working on stairs with my therapist,” he says. “Within a few weeks, I may be able to move around without it.”

Dr. Blake notes that Jerl’s experience reflects what many patients hope for.

“Most patients experience significant arthritic pain relief soon after surgery,” he says. “With home health and physical therapy, they gradually regain strength and independence.”

At the same time, Dr. Blake emphasizes that healing continues even after pain improves.

“Sometimes patients feel so much better right away that they assume they’re fully healed,” he explains. “Even when pain is gone, the body is still repairing tissue and adapting to the new joint. Following post-operative guidelines closely is critical to protect that progress and ensure long-term success.”

*Jerl Leonard with Jon Blake, D.O.,
Orthopedic Surgeon*

Four weeks after hip surgery, Letha Newkirk is already making progress. With guidance from her physical therapist and Leisa Witherspoon, PTA, she's rebuilding strength and working toward a simple goal: walking confidently in her yard again.



WHEN TO SEEK HIP REPLACEMENT SURGERY

Hip replacement surgery is usually considered after conservative treatments such as medication, injections, or physical therapy are no longer enough.

WHEN TO CONSIDER CONSULTATION: KEY SIGNS

- Persistent hip or groin pain that affects walking or sleep
- Difficulty climbing stairs or completing everyday tasks
- Pain radiating to the back or other joints

RISKS OF DELAYING SURGERY

“Waiting too long can make recovery more difficult,” Dr. Blake explains. “Muscle weakness, decreased mobility, and additional joint stress can prolong rehabilitation.”

READY TO TALK ABOUT JOINT REPLACEMENT SURGERY?

If joint pain is limiting your daily activities, it may be time to talk with a provider. Schedule a consultation with the orthopedic specialty clinic at Bates County Memorial Hospital.

**Contact BCMH at 660-200-7006.
No referral is required.**



HIP REPLACEMENT SURGERY: APPROXIMATE RECOVERY TIMELINE

► Week 1–3:

Walking with assistance

► Week 4–6:

Increasing mobility

► Week 6+:

Return to normal activities

“I Know What Critical Care Looks Like”

A Daughter's Perspective
on a Night That Mattered



Nan Kern recognized the warning signs when her husband could not move his arm and exhibited facial drooping. She drove him to the emergency department at Bates County Memorial Hospital, where stroke protocol was already in motion.

Bill Kern woke in the middle of the night and tried to turn over in bed. He couldn't.

His movements woke his wife, Nan, who later described them as “thrashing.” She noticed his words were garbled, one side of his face drooped, and he couldn't move one of his arms.

Nan recognized the signs of stroke, and she did not wait.

Bill was able to walk to the car, and Nan drove him to the emergency department at Bates County Memorial Hospital.

Their daughter, Tainya Robinson, lives near the hospital. She has spent 25 years working in hospital emergency departments and patient access leadership, most recently with St. Luke's Health System.

When she arrived, her dad was on his way to a CT scan. The scan confirmed the stroke was caused by a clot rather than bleeding in the brain, allowing the emergency team to safely administer clot-busting medication.

Everything that followed moved quickly.

“Before my dad even came out of CT, the helicopter was landing,” she said. “I told my mom, ‘LifeFlight just came in.’ She thought they must be there for someone else. It was that fast.”

As physicians and nurses worked at Bill's bedside, preparations were also being made for the next step in his care.

Once stabilized, Bill was transferred by LifeFlight Eagle to Research Medical Center for continued treatment. The hours that followed were uncertain. At first, he struggled to speak and could not walk on his own, but his family reported he quickly responded to treatment. After five weeks of rehabilitation, Bill had made significant improvement. He can now walk with a cane or walker, and while his speech is slower, he does not slur when he talks.

About a month after Bill's stroke, Tainya stopped by the emergency department to thank the staff personally for the care they gave her dad.

“I've worked in emergency rooms for 25 years. I know what critical care looks like,” Tainya Robinson said. “That's why I came back to thank them. They did an outstanding job that night.”

For the Kern family, recognizing the signs and acting quickly made all the difference. Tainya has seen stroke outcomes that do not turn out this way. “I know how bad they can be,” she said. “Not everyone bounces back like my dad did.”

When Minutes Matter:

How Early Stroke Care at BCMH Saves Lives

Some people assume rural hospitals simply hold patients until they can be transferred. In reality, those first moments of care often determine what happens next.

Stroke is a powerful example of why close-to-home emergency care matters. When symptoms appear, seeking immediate medical attention gives patients the best possible chance for recovery.

From the moment a patient arrives with stroke symptoms, a coordinated response begins, bringing together clinical staff, imaging, and laboratory services to assess, diagnose, and initiate treatment without delay.

“In the Emergency Department, our goal is to deliver fast and efficient care to provide patients with the best possible outcomes,” says Troy Trumbore, RN, department manager.

When stroke is suspected, the team can connect within minutes to a neurologist through a telemedicine partnership with Blue Sky Neurology. Specialists can evaluate the patient remotely, review imaging, and help guide treatment decisions alongside the local care team.

In 2025, BCMH received the American Stroke Association Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Rural Recognition Silver award, reflecting our commitment to evidence-based stroke care and continuous quality improvement.

For patients in rural communities, access to a local hospital is more than convenience. In a stroke emergency, it can be lifesaving.

F.A.S.T. *signs of stroke:*

F – Face Drooping

A – Arm Weakness

S – Speech Difficulty

T – Time to Call 911



▶ **0 Minutes:**

Spot symptoms.
Call 911 immediately.

▶ **60 Minutes:**

EMS and hospital
evaluations start.
Every minute counts.

▶ **Up to 3 Hours:**

Thrombolytic therapy
is most effective.
Quick action
saves brain cells.

▶ **Bottom Line:**

Recognize symptoms.
Call 911.
Faster treatment
improves outcomes.

Cataract Signs and Symptoms

When Blurry Vision Isn't Just Your Glasses



You may not notice a cataract right away. Cataracts develop gradually as the eye's natural lens becomes cloudy, often causing subtle changes at first. You might need brighter light to read, struggle with glare while driving at night, or feel like your glasses just aren't working the way they used to.

"There's no pain related to cataracts," said Cooper Rodgers, MD, a visiting ophthalmologist providing cataract surgery at BCMH. "What people usually notice is blurry vision and glare. Road signs become harder to see, the headlights of oncoming traffic feel more debilitating, and reading fine print becomes more challenging – even with glasses."

A cataract is the clouding of the eye's natural lens and one of the leading causes of vision loss. Because the changes happen slowly, many people adjust without realizing how much their vision has declined.

"The beautiful thing about cataract surgery is how quickly patients notice improvement," Dr. Rodgers said. "We can take people whose vision has severely limited their independence and, within 24 hours, help them see clearly again. It allows them to return to work, recognize loved ones, and get back to the activities they enjoy."

If blurry vision, glare, or difficulty reading is affecting your daily life, don't assume it's just your glasses. Schedule an eye exam and learn whether cataracts may be the cause.

Appointments with Dr. Rodgers at the Butler-based clinic of Noe, Miller and Miller are scheduled through Grin Eye Care. Call 913-829-5511.

Cataract surgery can dramatically improve your vision, restoring clarity for life's most meaningful moments.



Why Are You Driving?

How you're treated matters.

When someone needs cancer care, it often comes with difficult decisions, time, and long drives.

At Bates County Memorial Hospital, oncology providers are working to change that by bringing care closer to the community.

The oncology team includes Jaswinder Singh, MD, founder of Mid America Cancer Care, along with Heather Dains, FNP-BC, Bhide Ballagan, PA-C, and the BCMH Long-Nissen Infusion Center nursing team.

ACCESS

For some patients, the challenge is simply getting to care.

"We are driving for you so that you don't have to drive," Dr. Singh says. "We have taken the burden of driving."

TRUST

For others, the question is harder.

"They wonder, 'If he is so busy, why is he coming here?'" Dr. Singh says. "It's human nature. There is always the thought: would we have better treatment somewhere else?"

Cancer care today follows strict treatment guidelines, regardless of location.

"You may be receiving treatment here," he explains, "but your case is being discussed by an entire team of oncology specialists."



Jaswinder Singh, MD



Heather Dains, FNP-BC



Bhide Ballagan, PA-C

OUR ONCOLOGY PROVIDERS

Dr. Singh and his team bring complex cases to a multidisciplinary tumor board, where physicians review diagnoses, imaging, and treatment plans together.

"When looking for cancer care, don't look at the building. Don't look at the glossy floors. Look at how you are treated as a human being."

– Dr. Jaswinder Singh

EXPERIENCE

Dr. Singh encourages patients to focus on what matters most.

"Patients don't always receive the same kind of treatment in larger facilities as they get here," he says. "These nurses know how to treat people."

That support begins from the first visit.

"The first visit can be overwhelming," says Heather Dains, FNP-BC. "We want patients to know we're here to support them and advocate for them through every step."

DO YOU TRUST US TO SERVE?

Sometimes, patients may still choose to seek care elsewhere.

"If a patient wants a second opinion, they can get it within our group or go elsewhere," Dr. Singh says. "But you can start here. If you don't want us to be your chef, we will be your server. The question is: do you trust us to serve?"

CANCER CARE AT BCMH

- Oncology consultations and treatment planning
- Chemotherapy and infusion therapy at the Long-Nissen Infusion Center
- Collaboration with regional specialists when additional services are needed

Scheduling: 660-200-7006

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Inside a PRP Therapy Appointment

Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) therapy uses a concentrated portion of your own blood to support the body's natural healing response. Here's a quick look at what happens during a typical appointment.

1. BLOOD DRAW

A small sample of your blood is collected, similar to routine lab work.

2. PLATELETS ARE CONCENTRATED

Your blood is placed in a centrifuge, which spins the sample to separate and concentrate the platelets.

3. TARGETED INJECTION

The platelet-rich plasma is injected into the area being treated by your orthopedic provider.



Bonnie Austin, pictured with Dr. Blake, was one of the first patients treated when BCMH's PRP Therapy clinic opened.

