

Your Health

Mike “Coach K” Krzyzewski Shares Insight Into His Battle With Osteoarthritis

(NAPSA)—At one point in his career, Mike “Coach K” Krzyzewski never thought he would see this moment. As the USA men’s basketball team stood on the podium to receive its 2012 Olympic gold medal, Coach K thought back to a more difficult time, when he was in constant pain.

The pain started in his groin and began to consume his daily life. As the men’s basketball coach at Duke University, he needed to support his team, actively running up and down the court. But his pain slowed him down and eventually caused him to coach from a sideline chair.

“I really came close to retiring from coaching because the pain was getting unbearable both on and off the court, despite daily medication and physical therapy,” said Coach K. “That ’99 season could very well have been my last if I had not gotten help.”

Coach K’s Journey To Hip Replacement

He finally saw a doctor and found out the pain was caused by severe osteoarthritis in his left hip. In 1999, after consulting with an orthopaedic surgeon, he had his left hip replaced. A couple years later, when he experienced similar symptoms in his right hip, Coach K didn’t wait as long. He spoke with his orthopaedic surgeon right away and they decided to replace his right hip. Following both procedures, he underwent post-surgery rehabilitation to facilitate his recovery.

But Coach K isn’t the only one who has had severe joint pain. In fact, one in five Americans suffers from a debilitating joint disease called osteoarthritis, a leading cause of disability in the U.S. Osteoarthritis begins with stiffness and pain from the affected



Coach K encourages those with severe knee or hip pain to start a conversation with a doctor about treatment options.

joint and can eventually lead to long-term health problems if left untreated. The disease wears down the cartilage in the affected joints, which causes the bones to rub together and results in swelling, pain and limited range of motion. Still, people wait up to 11 years before seeking hip and knee replacement surgery.*

Resource for Those Experiencing Severe Joint Pain

In an effort to encourage those suffering from severe joint pain to talk to their doctor about treatment options, Coach K teamed up with DePuy Orthopaedics, Inc. to share his experience with osteoarthritis and hip replacement surgery. His story is part of the booklet “Had I Known Then,” edited by Ellyn Spragins, author of the best-selling “Letters to My Younger Self”® book series. “Had I Known Then” includes letters from joint replacement patients to their younger selves to provide encouragement and insight about their own experiences.

“With the benefit of hindsight, I realized that, for all those years when I was suffering from osteoarthritis, I was bringing other opponents to the basketball court—pain, fatigue, lack of movement—and that really limited my ability to be a good leader and coach. I was battling a lot of opponents, not just those on the court. I really wish I would have had my hip replaced sooner,” said Coach K.

Through speaking with Coach K and others who suffered from osteoarthritis, Ellyn Spragins discovered that few people reflect on the impact their health has on their lives, even though physicality is intimately tied to emotional well-being. With this collection of letters, she hopes the booklet inspires people to learn from the examples of other joint replacement patients and consider the impact that arthritis pain is having on them and their families now and how treatment could affect the course of their lives.

To read the booklet, including Coach K’s letter to his younger self, visit www.HadIKnownThen.com.

Important Safety Information:

The performance of knee and hip replacements depends on age, weight, activity level and other factors. There are potential risks and recovery takes time. People with conditions limiting rehabilitation should not have knee or hip replacement surgery. Only an orthopaedic surgeon can determine if knee or hip replacement is required based on an individual patient’s condition.

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*DePuy Hip: A&U/Segmentation. Final Report January 2008. Data on file.