

BupaNews

News, health advice and discount offers for Bupa members

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Pioneering knee pain treatment is first in UK

Bupa is offering members a pioneering new treatment for knee pain - the first time it has been available in the UK.

It gives those suffering pain as a result of conditions such as osteoarthritis, meniscal tears or ligament tears, a treatment option that can significantly reduce pain intensity, improve function and may ultimately reduce the need for surgery.

Developed overseas, the breakthrough technology has so far had impressive results for thousands of patients, many of whom were facing

surgery such as total knee replacements.

The APOS - All Phases of Step Cycle - treatment involves specially-designed footwear, known as Walkrights™, that alters the way you walk and reduces the load on painful joints.

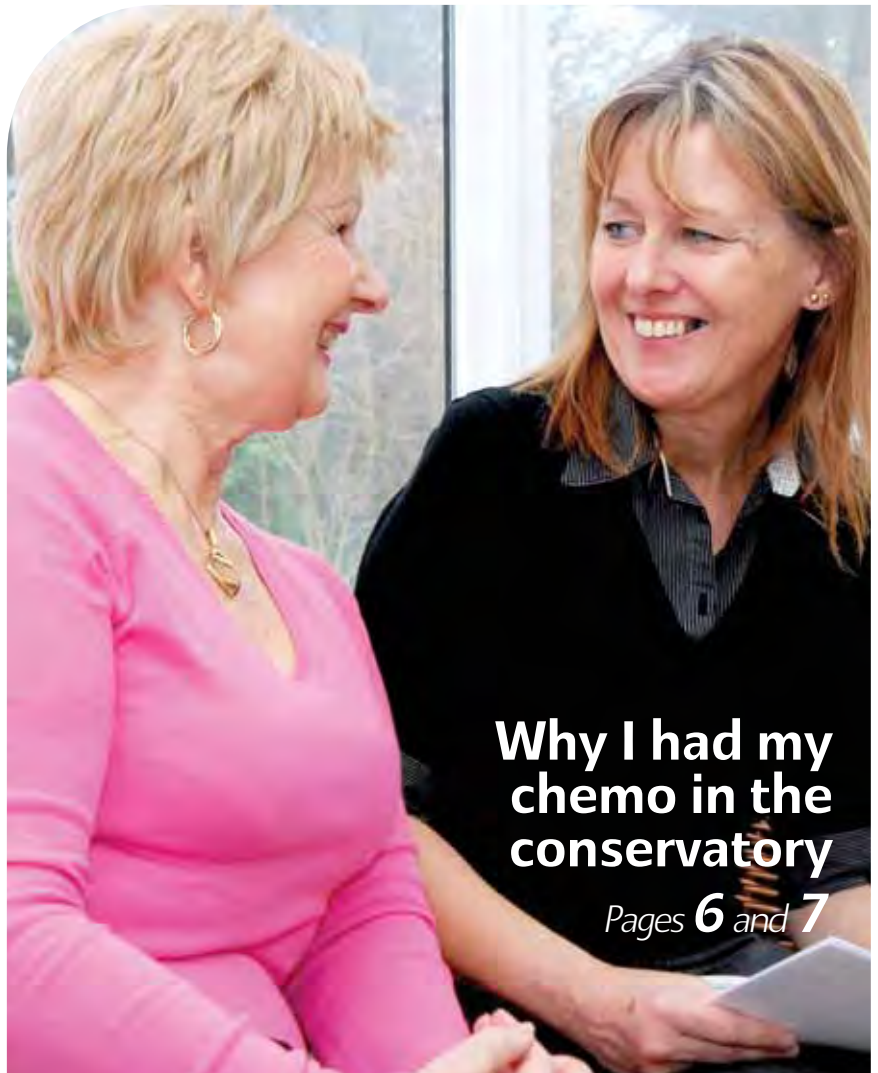
In an independent study 70 percent of APOS customers were able to stop taking

painkillers for their joint pain after starting treatment.

"This is new technology and the research results we have seen are extremely promising," said Bupa Strategy Consultant Dr Katrina Herren. "We will continue to evaluate research as well as monitor the progress of our own APOS customers.

"Knee surgery carries risks as well as benefits -

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Why I had my chemo in the conservatory

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Member

Bupa is trialling APOS as a benefit to members for eligible conditions of the knee. It is also available on a self-pay basis for treatment of conditions relating to the lower back, hip and ankle, for which members are eligible for a 35 percent discount: see page 3.

discount

Sign up for email updates on the latest news and discount offers at www.bupa.co.uk/register

Bupa



Set the kids a healthy example

Childhood obesity in the UK has risen significantly over the last few years. The Government has a strategy to help combat obesity in children with the aim of significantly reducing the number of overweight and obese children by 2020.

Why does it matter?

Being overweight is unhealthy. It can lead to problems in later life including: coronary artery diseases, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes, and it can affect a child's self-esteem.

What can I do?

Children learn by example and the best thing a parent or relative can do is get active, eat healthily, and offer words of encouragement.

Should I ban the computer?

With technological advances it can be difficult to encourage some children to go and play outside. However, screen time should be restricted to a maximum of two hours per day and a child should be active for at least one hour per day. You could consider combining the two with a console such as the Nintendo Wii, which uses motion-sensitive controls to mimic the actions of a tennis racket or golf club to give the feel of actually playing a sport.

How can I get them to exercise?

Encourage them to participate in out-of-school activities such as joining a sports club or a dance class. You could also play football or tennis together.

Try walking to school

As part of the effort to encourage children to take more outdoor exercise the charity Living Streets organises Walk to School Week (18-22 May).

About half of children don't walk to school regularly, with increasing numbers being driven by car. The charity says that not only does this contribute to childhood obesity, it affects traffic congestion and air pollution.

Further information:

Visit www.walktoschool.org.uk or call 020 7377 4900.

What about their diet?

It can be as simple as cutting down on high-calorie snacks to sugar-rich drinks. Try and replace these items with fruit and vegetables and aim for at least five portions a day. Regular sit-down meals with the family will also help get your child into good eating habits.

Bupa is playing its part through Activ-eat, a programme in which employees visit schools to spell out the healthy eating message in a variety of fun ways. Children are each given a pedometer to encourage them to take part in physical activity.

The facts about obesity

- Obesity causes about 18 million sick days and 30,000 deaths a year in England alone.
- According to *The Daily Telegraph*

treating obesity costs the NHS £1 billion a year.

- Levels of obesity in England have tripled since 1980.

Now I don't have to drop when I shop



Linda Green's knee problem used to make supermarket shopping a long and painful process.

"I used to get halfway round the shop and have to stop and sit down for at least 20 minutes before I could finish," she said.

But two months of the APOS Walkright™ Treatment has changed all of that.

"I spent two and a half hours shopping in London the other week, and that wouldn't have been possible before I started this."

Linda, 45, suffers from osteoarthritis of the knee and was recovering from back surgery when she heard about the revolutionary treatment.

She was almost crippled with pain before starting on APOS, and even ironing was a problem.

She said: "I couldn't stand up to do the ironing, but with my new Walkrights™ I can do it with ease."

The treatment is gradual, says Linda. "You start out wearing the Walkrights™ for 20 minutes a day, and then you gradually build up the time. I'm now wearing them for about two hours a day."

Linda said: "I've managed to build up my core strength and have full movement of my back again."

"I have been able to put off the possibility of surgery for much longer and cut back on my medication."

Treatment is first in the UK

From page 1

for example, an artificial knee joint may have to be replaced after 10-15 years - and NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) recommends that people should exhaust non-surgical options before deciding to have an operation.

"The APOS Treatment is suitable for any age group and can be used at home or at work."

The Bupa HealthLine - the free 24-hour members' health information service that includes nurses expert in the APOS Treatment - will offer advice on your suitability for the treatment.

It is currently on offer at Bupa Wellness centres in Solihull and Reading and, based on their experience, could be rolled out to other centres in the UK.

Dr Herren said: "Members will still be able to opt for surgery or traditional physiotherapy; what we are saying is that some might want to consider this first."



Walk your way to knee pain relief

Here's how the pioneering APOS Treatment works

What is the APOS Walkright™ system? It consists of infinitely adjustable 'Pertupods™' attached to the soles of specially-designed footwear.

How does it work? It redesigns the way you walk. As we walk, our body's weight is carried alternately by each leg, creating a weight on the lower back and limb joints with every step. In response to this, the muscles contract in a co-ordinated way to stabilise our joints.

The foot's points of contact with the ground during each step determine how our weight is distributed and which muscles will react.

By individually calibrating the Pertupods™ to alter your points of contact with the ground, the system readjusts the distribution of your body's weight away from damaged areas with the aim of reducing pain.

This retrains the body's neuromuscular system - which co-ordinates the interaction of the muscles and nerves - into patterns that improve the function of the joint.

How do I know if the system is right for me? You can call the APOS-trained team at the Bupa HealthLine on 0845 600 3748* to discuss with an expert nurse whether your condition makes you suitable for the treatment and if it can be funded

through your Bupa cover during this trial period.

Then you will visit an APOS Centre, at present in Solihull and Reading, for an evaluation supported by a computerised laboratory test, which analyses your movement while you walk. Your custom-fitted system will be assembled on the spot and an APOS-trained physiotherapist will design a personal treatment programme to perform at home or in the office at your convenience.

APOS can also be used on a self-pay basis to treat conditions affecting the hip, lower back and ankle. Customers will receive a free initial consultation following which a recommendation as to suitability will be made. An introductory 35 percent discount is available exclusively to Bupa members on the self-pay option.

What happens next? You return for follow-up consultations and, if necessary, the APOS clinician may consider recalibration, as well as changes to the treatment programme according to your progress. You can also phone one of the APOS-trained experts at Bupa for advice (see below).

How quickly do customers typically feel improvement? Some customers feel some pain relief even after only one use of the system.

After just a few weeks of 30 minutes of walking each day many patients experienced a reduction in pain that lasted an entire day, as well as improved function - not just when wearing the Walkrights™.

In the long term the APOS Treatment keeps customers walking and active, and improves wellbeing.

Call the Bupa HealthLine for expert advice on APOS

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treatment of conditions relating to the lower back, hip and ankle, for which members are eligible for a 35 percent discount.

● You can find further information about the system at www.apostreatment.co.uk

* Calls may be recorded and may be monitored.