

August/September Update

Diane Lees

As you may remember, I had the Regenexx stem cell therapy in late July. Since then, it has been a very interesting few weeks.

The first week was tough; I experienced a lot of pain and was fairly immobile. I followed instructions to the letter including wearing the brace that had been prescribed whenever I was mobile. I was also told not to be in a hurry and to just take it easy. (Remember, I am 68; not 30!)

I went back to my yoga studio two days after the procedure – sitting with knee propped, using my brace, and teaching without actually participating and then spent the rest of the time at home resting.

Things started progressing and within a couple of weeks I was walking about a mile – slowly. Still no steps and pretty much off the pain meds.

Then I had a setback. On Wednesday, August 5th, I started experiencing increased pain in the knee; on the medial side. This is opposite the stem cell injection site just for reference. By Saturday, I was unable to walk and sent a message to Dr. Kruse that the pain was about 9.5 on a scale of 1-10 and that besides being unable to walk, I was terrified.

Within a short time, Dr. Kruse called me back and, with a few simple questions determined what MIGHT be happening and said to get in to the office first thing Monday morning.

We drove up to Toledo (a bit over two hours) and was brought in to the office in a wheel chair. Within minutes, the regenerative medicine team had checked the knee, including an ultrasound, and determined that the stem cells were just fine. The knee was very swollen and Dr. Kruse decided to remove the fluid that had built up – to the tune of 55cc!

Once the fluid had been removed, I was able to get up and hobble around a bit unaided – first time in almost a week.

I decided that if I was up and about, I should probably be using the brace. And that is when we discovered that the brace was creating most of, if not all the issues. Somehow it was pressing against the medial meniscus causing the knee to react by swelling. Touching the knee at one place created a 10+ pain response and we had our culprit.

I was sent home – with instructions not to use the brace and with pain meds – to see what happened over the next two weeks when I was to come in for my regular checkup.

Things began to steadily improve, but at the August 31st check-up Dr. Kruse was not very happy with my range of motion or flexibility. He ordered more aquatic therapy and told me to keep working on moving the leg. My stem cells were just fine - by the way.

I believe his main concern was that damage to the patella, which had happened long ago but had been masked by other issues within the knee and hadn't caused any problems, was now rearing its ugly head and that something might needed to be done about it; perhaps even surgically.

So, I am writing one week later on Tuesday, September 8th, to offer what I believe to be a most positive report.

I am able to go up and down steps normally. Today, I am able to not only turn the crank on my bike but to spin at a reasonably high rpm. While I am still experiencing stiffness, I have minimal pain and feel that everything is moving in a positive direction daily.

My goals are still the same: to sit cross-legged and to be able to achieve child's pose in my yoga classes and to run a 5K by the end of the year.

My fear and discouragement that I had perhaps made a bad choice in having the Regenexx procedure has been replaced once again with renewed excitement and hope.