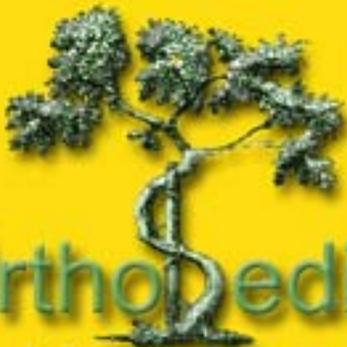




Deborah Williams
Design & Layout, Medical Media



The Orthopedic
Surgery Handbook

The repair of this tree alludes to what we do as orthopedic surgeons. Orthopedics is the branch of medicine concerned with the correction or prevention of skeletal deformities. As orthopedic surgeons, however, we also have specialists that work with muscles, ligaments, tendons and nerves in addition to the bones and joints.

Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Houston, Texas



Telephone Numbers

Mark Johnson, MD-----713-794-8950

Chief, Orthopedic Section

Houston VAMC Main Line-----713-791-1414

Toll Free-----1-800-553-2278

Telecare-----713-794-8985

Toll Free-----1-800-639-5137

Surgery Clinic (NU5C)-----713-791-1414 Ext. 3232

Surgery Appointments-----713-794-8985

713-791-1414 Ext. 2458

Welcome to the HVAMC Orthopedic Service

Orthopedic surgery is the branch of medicine which treats disorders of the muscles, joints, ligaments, tendons and bones. The field is sub-divided into specialties, which focus on the hand/elbow/shoulder, foot/ankle, spine, hip and knee. Patients are seen by the orthopedic services after their Primary Care Provider makes a referral/consult. This brochure is intended to orient our patients to the Orthopedic Service and provide answers to common questions about the way things operate. We are proud to provide this specialized service to you, our Veteran patients.

The Orthopedic Clinic

The Orthopedic clinic is located in 5C, the west wing of the 5th floor. The clinic schedule is divided by sub-specialty.

- **General** Orthopedic clinic is held on Tuesday. The General Orthopedic clinic is where patients with new orthopedic problems are evaluated and recommendations for treatment or further testing are made
- **Upper extremity/hand clinic** is held on Monday
- **Spine clinic** (neck and back) on Wednesday
- **Foot/ankle clinic** on Thursday
- **Sports clinic** (knee and shoulder) on Friday morning
- **Joint replacement** (hip and knee) clinic on Friday afternoon



Dr. Mark Johnson, Chief Orthopedic Service and Christine Rector, PA

Dr. Mark Johnson, Chief of the Orthopedic Service, supervises these clinics. The sub-specialty clinics are staffed and supervised by VAMC staff physicians who are experts in that sub-specialty. Evaluation of your care often requires x-rays be done before your clinic visit.

Staff Physicians

The staff physicians are responsible for overseeing the outpatient clinics and for supervising all surgical procedures performed at this medical center. They are also faculty at the Baylor College of Medicine. The staff orthopedic surgeons at Houston VAMC are:

- **Mark Johnson, M.D.**, Chief of Orthopedic Service
- **Jeffrey Budoff, M.D.**, Upper Extremity Surgery
- **Michael Heggeness, M.D.**, Spine Surgery
- **John Marymount, M.D.**, Foot and Ankle Surgery
- **Ken Mathis, M.D.**, Joint Replacement Surgery

I have been taking this medication for years. Why won't the doctors just fill my prescription?

All patients who are referred to the VA clinic are assessed by one of our PAs or MDs before treatment is determined. We do not fill prescriptions recommended by non-VA care providers without good faith examinations. In many instances, our doctors will prescribe a treatment or medication which differs from the one recommended by the outside facility. Our staff doctors are all members of the faculty at Baylor College of Medicine, and as such, provide high quality state-of-the-art orthopedic care.

Who can I talk to for some answers to my questions or solutions to my problems?

The Chief of the Orthopedic Service at the Veteran Affairs Medical Center, **Dr. Mark Johnson** is available to speak with any of our patients regarding any questions or problems related to your care here. You may ask any of our staff and they will be happy to set up an appointment. These appointments are usually on Tuesdays. Please allow us the opportunity to address any concerns you may have.

Who is my doctor? I see a different person every time I come for a visit.

Most of your direct contact will be with the residents or physician assistants. The surgery residents are assigned to the VA for 3 months rotations. For this reason, it is likely that the individual you see on one visit may not be here the next time you come. Continuity of care is provided by the attending faculty who are permanently assigned to this hospital. Important decisions regarding medical treatment, surgery and diagnostic tests are made with the attending physicians and the staff surgeons directly supervise the care that you receive here.

Who will actually do my surgery?

The staff physicians and residents perform surgery. The staff physicians are physically present for and directly supervise the key portions of all major orthopedic procedures. Residents or fellows may perform some portions of the procedures such as wound closures. This does not differ from common accepted practice in the private sector.

I heard about a great new treatment on TV or the internet. Why can't I get this treatment at the VA?

There is a steady stream of new treatments being advocated for a wide variety of orthopedic problems. Many of these treatments receive a great deal of publicity before they have been scientifically proven to work. Our policy is to wait until a new treatment or procedure has been thoroughly evaluated for safety and effectiveness before offering it to our patients. This policy functions to save much-needed funds for providing care with established treatment methods and also protects our patients against treatments which may turn out to be ineffective or even dangerous in the long run.

Orthopedic Residents

The orthopedic residents are licensed physicians who are in the process of completing their education in the specialty of orthopedic surgery at the Baylor College of Medicine. Our residents are the backbone of the orthopedic management team and are responsible for much of the direct patient care that you receive.



(Left) Yolanda Deltoro, RN, Christine Rector, PA, Constance Kimbark, PA, Mark Johnson, MD, Jill Pritchard, Frank Bernal, PA

Physician Assistants (PAs)

Physicians' assistants are trained professional who provide a wide range of medical services under the supervision of a physician. Our physician assistants are very knowledgeable in the field of orthopedic surgery. They provide continuity of care for the orthopedic outpatients visits. Without their dedication and hard work, it would not be possible to offer the level of service that we provide. The physician assistants on the orthopedic service are:

- **Frank Bernal, PA**
- **Constance Kimbark, PA**
- **Christine Rector, PA**

Cast Technician

Our cast technician, **Jehu Peets**, is responsible for applying and maintaining casts and splints. The cast technician performs a wide variety of other important functions with the team.



Front Row: (left) Maria A Servin, LVN, Ann Crippen, RN, Dennamma Jacob, RN, Josephine Sidotong
Back Row: JoAnn Dupree, NA, Ruby Richards, NA, Mark Johnson, MD, Yolanda Deltoro, RN,
Patricia Gray, LVN

Nursing Staff

Nurses will be an integral part of your orthopedic experience, from the beginning in the orthopedic clinic and pre-operative screening clinic and operating room, and inpatient unit. The nurses in the orthopedic clinic will provide information, instructions, and education about your orthopedic condition or surgery. Nurses serve as liaison between patients and providers. Nurses are important members of the orthopedic team.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do I have to wait so long for an orthopedic appointment?

We strive to meet the national VA standard of no longer than 30 days wait for an orthopedic appointment. If your appointment is delayed beyond this time, please notify our clinic staff so that we may address the problem.

Why do I have to wait so long for my surgical procedure?

There is a very high demand for certain orthopedic procedures. Total knee and hip replacement procedures and arthroscopy of the knee, in particular, have long waiting lists at the present time. Sometimes, medial clearance is necessary before a procedure can be scheduled and this process may also contribute to the waiting time for surgery.

Why do I have to wait so long in the waiting room? It's been over an hour since my schedule appointment and I'm still sitting here.

The orthopedic clinics are some of the most heavily visited specialty clinics in the medical center. Appointment times are tightly scheduled. Often, unforeseen problems – such as one or more care providers calling in sick, a patient showing up with a complex problem that takes more than the allotted time for resolution, or an emergency consultation which calls one of the care providers away from the clinic area – place a strain on the system leading to prolonged waiting times. We will keep you informed when there are delays. When these situations arise, we hope that you will grant us your pardon. We are working hard to provide the best care to all of our patients.