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## **Orthopedists**

### **Orthopaedic Doctors**

Orthopedists, also called Orthopaedic doctors, are physicians and surgeons who are trained in treating injuries to the bones and soft connective tissues surrounding the bones. Injuries to the bones and soft connective tissues are one of the most common health conditions reported by all ages of individuals. Older adults commonly are seen for the chronic conditions of arthritis, osteoarthritis, hip fractures and surgeries for joint replacements (i.e., knee, hip and shoulder replacements).

### **Training and Certifications**

A physician who has been trained to be an orthopaedic surgeon has completed a minimum of 4 yrs. of medical school and an additional 3-7 years, full-time in an accredited residency program specializing in orthopaedic surgery. At the completion of the course of study, the individual must successfully pass the certification examination to be a Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon.

A certification by a specialty board identifies those health care professionals who have met a standard of training and experience beyond what is required for licensure, which is a minimum requirement.

### **Preparing to Visit an Orthopedist**

During your visit to the Orthopedist or Orthopaedic surgeon be prepared to explain why you are seeing the doctor in as much detail as possible. Tell your doctor if:

- There are activities that you are unable to do.
- You experience pain when you do certain activities.
- Describe the activities that cause the most pain?

### **Ask your doctor if:**

- There are any exercises that you may be able to do, both on land or water, which may be helpful in alleviating the pain you are feeling
- About all options for treatment of your condition.
- Physical therapy could benefit your condition, If surgery is recommended, ask the doctor to explain what you can expect to experience during the surgery, immediately following the surgery and the recuperation period—short term and long term.

## **Cost and Coverage**

Generally, but depending upon your condition, Medicare Part B will cover 80% of the costs associated with orthopaedic treatment. Your Orthopedist will help you better understand what Medicare will or will not cover. Depending on your medical insurance, you may need to get a referral from your Primary Care Physician to schedule an appointment. It is important to check with your health care insurance carrier prior to your visit to the specialist.

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