



Joint Relief

A CUTTING-EDGE MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY COMPANY MAY HAVE FOUND THE SECRET TO RELIEVING KNEE PAIN WITHOUT DRUGS OR SURGERY.

By Jenna Sampson

The average career of a professional athlete is three to five years. That's just a fraction of the average person's lifespan, yet the resulting joint damage can last a lifetime.

There's good news on the horizon, however. Cutting-edge technology from BioniCare Medical Technologies, a

company with 15 years of research in the can, may be on the cusp of changing joint recovery forever.

"The typical person moves their knee 3 million times a year, but pro athletes use their knees up to 20 million times a year, so the cartilage wears down over the years

like a ball bearing," says Dr. Gerry Faust, BioniCare's chairman and co-founder. "The old idea was that once cartilage is removed, you can't grow it back. The first thing you see with the BioniCare device is systematic relief and return to function. Over time, you see structural change."

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BioniCare's BIO-1000 System is the only non-invasive, non-drug option approved by the FDA in the U.S. to treat osteoarthritis of the knee. The company was introduced in 2002, received FDA approval in 2003, and received Medicare approval in January of 2006.

The electric device, which generates a specific signal, is held in place by a black wrap that resembles a knee brace. Recommended use is eight hours per day (most patients use it at night), and the device can treat both knees at the same time if desired.

The company also makes a device to treat arthritis of the hand, and is developing devices for the ankle, foot, shoulder and elbow. Spine and neck devices are also on the drawing board.

Patients who use the system — including NFL alums Larry Brown, Chuck Detwiler, Greg Sampson and other NFLPA members — are avoiding knee replacements, reducing arthritis pain and returning to normal function.

Brown, the 1972 NFL MVP running back for the Washington Redskins, was about to get the knee replacement surgery recommended by his doctor when he heard about BioniCare, and changed his mind.

“My knees are doing very well,” says Brown, who has used the device on both knees since April 2005. “I’m not having any problems. Before, my left knee had damaged ligaments. On the right, I had

ligament and cartilage damage. I’ve had very severe pain and stiffness in both knees before using the BioniCare device.”

Sampson, a seven-year offensive tackle for the Houston Oilers, was consuming massive amounts of Ibuprofen capsules just to get through the day. His left knee has no cartilage, the result of three surgeries.

“I heard about the BioniCare device at a retired players meeting and thought I would give it a try even though I was extremely skeptical,” he admits. “Amazingly, I can tell you my pain is gone. No more Ibuprofen, and I’m back to my old activities.”

Better yet, current members of the Baltimore Ravens may be prolonging their playing days with the use of BioniCare. Bill Tessoroff, head athletic trainer for the Baltimore Ravens, is the second-longest tenured trainer in the NFL (with 33 years under his belt). He has five devices out to his players, some of whom were consuming Glucosamine and Chondroitin supplements with no results.

“We’ve had very positive results,” says Tessoroff. “Players are noticing the improvement and notice that when they stop using it, the knee soreness returns, so they get back on it. I would say, based on our limited experience, we’ve had some very positive results with it.”

To understand how BioniCare works, it helps to understand the difference between healthy and damaged cartilage. When a

joint is in motion, cartilage is compressed and fluids carry positive ions out of the cell. They tear the positive charges away from the negative charges and create an electrical current. In healthy cartilage, the signal is precise and never changes. As you get older, however, or suffer an injury, you lose the capability of producing the exact signal that maintains the healthy cartilage. That’s where BioniCare comes in.

“We patented that exact electrical signal and the mechanism by which you get it, at the depth of cartilage that you need it,” says Faust. “We are literally restoring the electrical properties of the cartilage, which allows them to begin to make that signal themselves to be healthy.”

In the process, the company is preventing a large amount of knee replacements. In fact, orthopedic surgeons are the highest prescribers of BioniCare, mostly to patients who are too old, too young, too overweight or too sick for the knee replacement surgery.

And soon, predicts Faust, professional athletes will be among the top users of BioniCare. “When professional teams start finding out what BioniCare can do,” he says, “I would imagine every one of those joint injuries will be prescribed the BioniCare system.” **OT**

HOW TO GET BIONICARE: More than 2,000 physicians currently prescribe the device. Call BioniCare (1-866-BIO-KNEE) to find the one closest to you. For more information, visit www.bionicare.com.