

TITLE: New Growth and New Beginnings
DECK: A local orthopedic surgeon finds himself not only in a new office, but also with a whole new purpose

After thirty years of experience, thousands of arthroscopic procedures and countless awards and recognitions, accomplished orthopedic surgeon Dr. Michael Gitelis could have started considering retirement and warmer locales. But, Dr. Gitelis is an innovator and an inventor.

And as far as he is concerned, there is too much work still to be done:

"There are no magic bullets to reduce pain," says Dr. Gitelis, who has recently opened up a new office in Hoffman Estates where he specializes in research, sports medicine, and the newest techniques in pain management and joint preservation. "But today, we have so many groundbreaking therapies available that I can provide for my patients."

A University of Illinois graduate, Dr. Gitelis received his Medical Degree from Rosalind Franklin University at Chicago Medical School and completed his orthopedic training at Rush Presbyterian St. Lukes Hospital. He went on to complete an Arthroscopic Fellowship with Dr. Lanny Johnson, the forefather of the arthroscopic technique. Yet, never has he found himself at such an exciting crossroads in his medical career as he has right now.

"Let's say a patient comes into the office complaining of knee pain, but they don't want a total knee replacement," explains Dr. Gitelis, "They want to reduce inflammation and of course, reduce pain. So, we can look into regenerative options, such as PRP." Dr. Gitelis not only considers himself an arthroscopic surgeon, but also a dedicated researcher who is well versed in the literature surrounding the use of PRP, stem cells, allograft cartilage, and allograft tissue. He recommends these new treatments to patients who he feels will benefit from such innovative, regenerative biologics.

PRP stands for Platelet Rich Plasma – human blood that is spun down and separated producing a concentration of platelets that can aid the body in the healing process and reduce pain. Stem cells are obtained in two ways: from donors or from the patient's own bone marrow.

"We can procure stem cells from the patient's bone marrow or fat cells," explains Dr. Gitelis, who is Board Certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgeons, received a Patients' Choice Award, and was named a Top Regional Doctor by Castle Connolly in 2017. "I think many people forget that our bodies have a natural healing ability, and we can help it along with these new technologies."

Of course, any new technologies come with its share of naysayers.

"Biologics are not new to medicine, use of stem cells date back to the 1950s, but use in orthopedic medicine is relatively recent in this country," says Dr. Gitelis, who also points to government regulations and opioid usage as topics that are muddling the landscape. "But the fact is, both PRP and stem cell therapies have shown really promising results in published studies."

Of course, to anyone who isn't a doctor or scientist, it can be an incredibly difficult and confusing medical landscape. Especially since so many so-called stem cell therapy centers are popping up throughout the Chicagoland area and in some cases are overcharging patients or giving injections for the wrong indications. Which is why this is awfully personal to Dr. Gitelis.

"I have lost my voice so many times trying to explain all of this," laughs Dr. Gitelis. "But it's always worth it. I want to make a difference. Sometimes, it starts feeling like the Wild West out there, and I want to help my patients find their way through this new frontier."

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