

“...I don’t even think about it anymore.”

After years of painful wear and tear on a knee damaged by an old football injury, 51-year-old Battalion Chief Dave Neyens is back fighting fires – and back to the active lifestyle he thought he might never enjoy again.



Battalion Chief
Dave Neyens is
back on the job.

Neyens says it’s all thanks to orthopedic surgeon Dr. Craig McAllister of Proliance Surgeons and the cutting-edge research lab at Evergreen that’s allowed Dr. McAllister to refine a new type of total knee-replacement surgery. It marries minimally invasive surgery (MIS) with computer-assisted surgical techniques (CAS) to help give patients a perfectly aligned new knee.

On its own, minimally invasive surgery is improving patients’ lives after knee replacement. Dr. McAllister points to a study he published last year on 200 knee replacements that he performed. “Half were traditional surgeries; the other half were minimally invasive surgeries,” he says. “The traditional patients took a year to get back their pre-operative range of motion. The minimally invasive patients took just three months. They also had less pain, faster recovery and smaller incisions.”



Craig McAllister, MD

And that was without the computer-assisted techniques. Now, wireless mice attached to the patient’s leg and a computer up and running during surgery bring even less invasiveness and more precision to the operating table. The result is a knee that is better aligned and will last longer. Dr. McAllister compares it to your car’s tires. “If your front wheels are a little misaligned, it still feels fine when you drive,” he explains, “but

your tire wears out at 30,000 miles instead of 60,000 miles. If your new knee is even five degrees off, it may work fine, but it won’t last as long as one that is ideally aligned.”

ORTHOPEDIC RESEARCH CENTER

Evergreen is a leader in blending MIS and CAS – and one of the few places in the country to routinely use both of them in knee-replacement surgeries.

Evergreen is at the forefront of this revolution because of its Orthopedic Research Center, where Dr. McAllister and his colleagues refine their surgical techniques and redesign and test instruments needed for the procedures. “That’s why Evergreen is one of the very few places in the country that is able to combine MIS and CAS,” Dr. McAllister states.

That’s made Evergreen’s Orthopedic Research Center a destination learning center for surgeons, nurses and technicians from all over the United States. They come here to get practical experience in the operating room or to get hands-on experience in the lab with minimally invasive surgery using computer-assisted surgical techniques.

BACK TO NORMAL

Those revolutionary surgical techniques allowed Dave Neyens to return to the Everett Fire Department after just five months off the job. A year ago, he couldn’t even walk around his block because of the pain. Now he’s riding his bike, lifting weights and, of course, putting his life on the line whenever the fire alarm goes off. “There’s times when I don’t even think about it anymore,” Neyens smiles. “The joint feels totally normal.”

For referral to an Evergreen-affiliated orthopedic surgeon or a brochure on Evergreen’s orthopedic program, please call the Evergreen Healthline at 425.899.3000.