

## Minimally Invasive Surgery for Hips and Knees

At Ravalli Orthopedics & Sports Medicine, we are proud to offer minimally invasive surgical techniques for hip and knee joint replacement. These methods use smaller incisions and involve less muscle and tendon damage. This is a continuation of our commitment to offer orthopedic care using the latest proven methods. Research has shown that in the right patient, these techniques result in a new joint that functions every bit as well as those put in using larger, standard incisions. Even when it is necessary to make larger skin incisions, such as when someone is very big and/or overweight, the way we manage the muscles and tendons under the skin is less invasive. In my opinion, it is the “under the skin” part of the surgery that is most beneficial.

There has been a lot of excitement about “Minimally Invasive” in the media. Unfortunately, some of the claims you hear are a bit exaggerated. Claims of *reduced pain, quicker recoveries, and less blood loss* can make it sound as if getting your joint replaced is no longer a major surgery. These claims need to be put in perspective.

With the smaller incision, less skin and muscle are cut. This does help reduce pain and bleeding, but it does not eliminate them. In addition, recovery is usually quicker because there is less muscle damage. In other words, patients typically get out of bed, walk, and become independent with their personal care sooner due to less tissue damage. But make no mistake: this is still a big surgery, even if it is done through a smaller hole.

Total joint replacement is a surgery that can be life-changing for a person with severe pain. When all other options have failed and your pain is affecting your quality of life, it is something to consider. With minimally invasive techniques, recovery after surgery is improved and the size of the scar is reduced. Certainly, those are steps in the right direction.

**gregory m. behm, md**  
**Ravalli Orthopedics & Sports Medicine**  
**312 Fairgrounds Road**  
**Hamilton, MT 59840-3126**  
**Phone: (406) 361-7680**  
**Salmon, ID Phone: (208) 756-5790**