

Kathleen Medical Status, 4/21/2014

Kathleen had to undergo surgery on her left knee as a result of syringe removal of infected fluid on Saturday morning, 4/19/2014.

The surgery procedure was called Inspection and Debridement (I&D) which included replacing all of the replaceable plastic parts associated with the main titanium pieces in her knee replacement.

The procedure went well according to her doctor who cares for Kathleen like she was his mother.

Kathleen will be on IV / PICC line antibiotics for at least 6 weeks.

For those who did not get the background on this, on Holy Thursday, 4/17/2014, morning, Kathleen was unable to get up out of bed and walk to the bathroom as she has normally been doing. She thought there was something wrong with her left knee which had been replaced with an artificial knee set up on 10/31/2012. Once I got her to the bathroom using a rolling device and back to bed, I called her knee surgeon and got her in for his first appointment of the day at 1 PM that day. He manipulated the knee and even checked her hip. He tried to remove fluid from her knee but could not find any. He sent her home on a steroid med pack and Percocet for pain. He told us to visit the Emergency Room (ER) if these medicines did not help with moving the leg and easing the pain.

Kathleen used her wheel chair to get around the house, leave the house for Holy Thursday services, and return to the house for bed. She was unable to use her left leg for anything Thursday or Friday morning.

We went to the Virtua Voorhees ER on Friday afternoon and Kathleen was admitted late on Friday for evaluation of left leg infection and inflamed nerves in the T12-S1 area of her spine. Because she was on a blood thinner called Xarelto which has no antidote, she had to wait 48 hours for surgery. Another blood thinner was utilized which has an antidote so surgery would be possible on Monday.

After much soul searching we think the cause of this current infection problem was a painful tooth about 3-4 weeks ago which Kathleen treated with Sensodyne toothpaste only to find out upon return to her dentist two weeks ago that the tooth was in bad shape and the gums were infected. The dentist told Kathleen that if she had not kept the area clean with the Sensodyne she might have developed an abscess. He had to do a root canal as part of fixing the tooth and treating the gums. He gave her a strong antibiotic but the infection was already spreading. Unfortunately bacterial infection will hone in on any foreign objects and it apparently invaded the knee replacement materials and may also be the cause of the inflammation in her spinal fusion around L3-S1 which is impacting the performance of muscles in her left leg. That will be dealt with if there are still signs of infection, i.e. high white blood cell counts in future blood work.

Kathleen is now out of surgical recovery and is in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Room #2 for overnight observation.

We had to move from Virtua Voorhees, the newest hospital in our area, to Virtua Marlton, where Kathleen had the original knee replacement as well as other infection control work done. She will move to a regular room in Virtua Marlton probably tomorrow and may do some time in the Marlton Rehab Center where she was after the original knee replacement for Physical Therapy (PT).

Because of the 6 weeks of IV / PICC antibiotics she will either have home health care or I will take her to a facility where they do IV / PICC line maintenance on an outpatient basis. We have used both types of service before and are familiar with both.

My biggest concern is that they get Kathleen operating on both legs before they send her home where I have to lift her and maneuver her to the bathroom.

Kathleen will be able to communicate on her cell phone, 1-856-261-4974, or via e-mail, pfmckmw@verizon.net in a few days. Please give her time for recovery and then PT.