



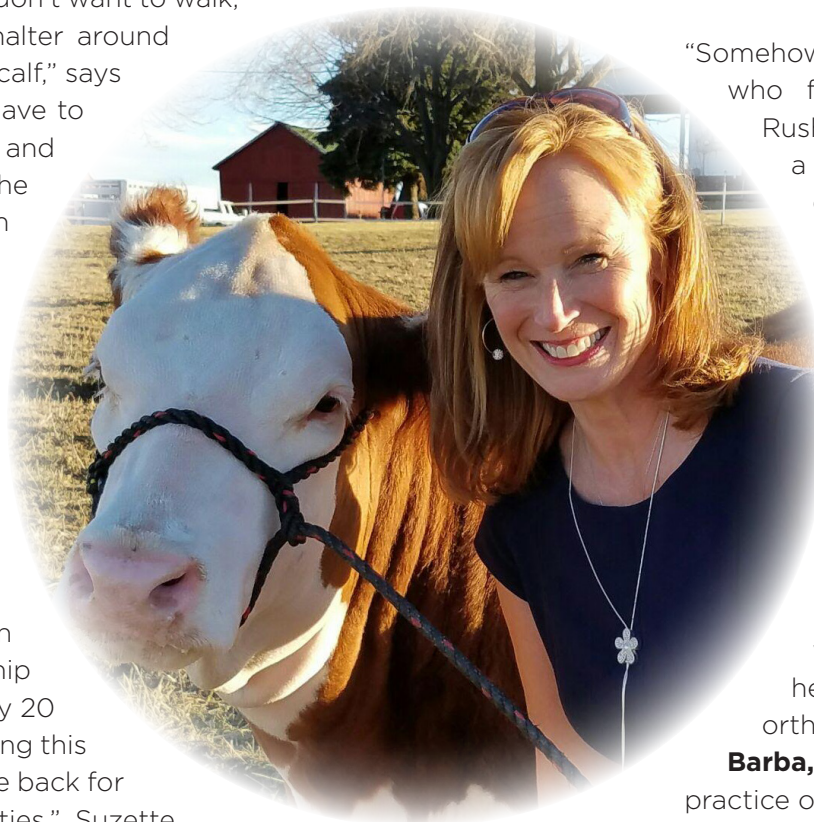
Suzette Muck: Cow encounters lead to **double hip replacement** and **thumb** surgeries

As a wife of a farmer, a mother of three girls and a special education teacher, **Suzette Muck** is always on the go. And she doesn't let a little pain slow her down. However, when a little pain turned into a big deal, she knew it was time to find out what was wrong.

"I had hip pain for years," says Suzette, "I chalked it up to getting older but then one night, out with friends, it took me about two or three minutes to muster the strength to move from the table and get out to the parking lot. Walking was excruciating."

Suzette was 44 years old at the time and her active lifestyle had aggravated a congenital defect in her hips. "We have to teach the calves to walk to show them and when they don't want to walk, you wrap the rope halter around your hip and pull the calf," says Suzette. "You really have to put your hip into it and the weight from the cow puts pressure on the hip too."

Suzette's family physician discouraged her from any treatment, citing her young age as a reason to not get a hip replacement. "The common thought was that hip replacements last only 20 years and if I was having this done at 44, then I'd be back for a new set in my sixties," Suzette explains.



That diagnosis did not sit well for this busy wife and mother. "How could I enjoy life with this constant pain? I'd rather be able to be active now and have my husband push me around in a wheelchair when I'm 60!" she says, laughing.

Suzette's first thought was to make an appointment at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. She thought the doctors there could come up with an alternative to a hip replacement. The appointment yielded bad and then worse news. The doctor she met with confirmed she needed a hip replacement in both hips. Unfortunately, he did not do hip surgery.

"Somehow they gave me a doctor who focused on knees!" The Rush doctor referred her to a colleague who wanted to do two separate surgeries, something Suzette was not 'hip' on doing. The thought of having to go through two surgeries, far away from home, was not ideal.

Shortly after her appointment at Rush, Suzette shared her dilemma with a friend who immediately referred her to OrthoIllinois and orthopedic surgeon **Mark Barba, MD**, who focuses his practice on hips and knees.

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From the minute she walked into Orthollinois, she knew she was at the right place. “The physical therapy area was in the front of the building and seeing that made me feel like they knew what they were doing,” says Suzette. “Everyone was so professional, polite and efficient, I knew I was making the right choice.”

And meeting Dr. Barba confirmed Suzette’s choice. “Doing a double hip replacement was not the norm,” Suzette says. “However, Dr. Barba listened to me and understood that being out of commission for two surgeries instead of one was just not feasible for me and my family. He agreed that with my age and health, a double hip replacement was possible. And I felt confident he knew what he was doing.”

After the surgery, Suzette says her pain went away immediately. “My back stopped hurting, my neck stopped hurting, all of my pain was gone and I felt 100 percent better, except for one thing,” she says.

It was another symptom of cattle farming. While working to get a halter on a steer, Suzette’s hand connected with the steer’s horn. Her thumb turned black and blue, but she didn’t think too much of it and went forward getting the steer ready for the show ring. Once the hip pain stopped and the pain in her hand didn’t, she knew she needed to make a return trip to Orthollinois.

This time, Suzette saw orthopedic surgeon **Brian Bear, MD**, who specializes in hands, wrists, and elbows. They decided on a treatment plan of injections to take care of the pain.

“I wanted to avoid surgery if possible and Dr. Bear never tried to steer me in one direction,” Suzette says. “He listened to me, laid out the options and made me feel confident in my decision.”

Finally, however, a recent injection lasted for only one week. Suzette scheduled surgery at the Orthollinois Surgery Center and is now on the road to recovery on her hand as well. “The surgical center was fantastic,” Suzette says, “I loved the medical environment without having to go to the hospital. It made me feel like it wasn’t a huge deal.”

Now completely on the mend, Suzette is so happy she chose Orthollinois she kiddingly wonders what she will ‘have done next.’

“In both my experiences I got the impression that these doctors are very busy,” Suzette says, “However, once they come into the exam room, they’re all yours. They listen to what you are saying and work with you on a treatment plan that makes sense for you. Dr. Barba and Dr. Bear gave me back a life that is pain free and I am so grateful.”



**To schedule a consultation,
please call 815-398-9491.**



Mark Barba, MD
Specializing in total joint replacement



Brian Bear, MD
Specializing in hand and upper extremity surgery

