
Dr. Gregory Denzel of Greeley Quick Care



injury & recovery: denzel style

by Maryjo Faith Morgan

What difference does a man's passion in life make to you? A lot if that man is in charge of your recovery and you are his patient.

Dr. Gregory Denzel's passion is his family. Relationship. It is key to his approach, to his wife and children, to his patients at Greeley Quick Care, and to the employers who contract their Workman's Compensation with him. In his busy single physician practice, about 50% of patients come for Urgent Care, which is available on a walk-in basis 24 hours a day throughout the week and Saturday. The other half are there due to on-the-job injuries.

Why do those workman's compensation patients have such a high recovery rate at consistently reasonable costs? It goes back to the rapport Denzel builds with his patients. "I think the employees themselves are very happy with us." Dr. Denzel explains, "They understand we are out for them, not only for the company, just to get the case closed. They know they are taken care of well."

Denzel says when patients realize they are

getting quality care and everything possible is being done to help improve their situation, they go along with treatment recommendations.

Conversely, patients who are hurried back to work too soon or lack trust in their treatment tend to experience more pain and are more likely to suffer from depression. They also doubt whether they are actually better, and are more likely to suspect being taken advantage of and are apt to hire a lawyer to find out.

It requires a balance

Denzel makes sure he is available to employers any day of the week to discuss problems or define needs. "I am looking out after them as well; they know me on a first name basis."

Serious about his responsibility to his patients

and the employers who contract their workman's comp with him, Denzel and both his physician's assistants pay attention to cost containment. "Large employers appreciate that we understand their needs, too. We are good at cost containment, which is beneficial to everybody. We do not use any therapy, surgery, or testing that is not necessary."

At the same time, Denzel looks out for his patients' overall wellness, not just getting them back to work fast. He makes sure patients do not feel like just a number, and they can see he is not a company doc merely pushing them through the system. Patients know they are getting the straight story at Greeley Quick Care. Where there is no resentment, there are fewer attempts to take advantage of the system.

“We are good at cost containment, which is beneficial to everybody.”

-Dr. Gregory Denzel

Most common on the job injuries

Although Denzel treats a broad variety of ailments and injuries, the most prominent types of injuries at work fall into three main categories:

- Repetitive Motion
- Lifting
- Strains

Carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis can be caused by repetitively pushing and reaching. The onset is not usually caused by one event, but rather a gradual build up of discomfort and increasing pain. The sooner this condition is diagnosed and treated, the better it responds to treatment.

"Lifting and twisting is the worst thing you can do to your back." Denzel is clear about the consequences, "You are causing the back to support all the weight you are carrying. With less and less support as you twist, it isolates the spinal vertebrae, and all the strain is taken up by one or two muscles and only one or two vertebra." This may cause a slipped disc (herniated disc) and in some cases may require surgery. Denzel urges prevention. "Proper lifting techniques include bending at the knee, so the whole back lifts the weight."

Strains come from a myriad of sources, not only stepping on uneven ground. Ankles, wrists, or shoulders can be hit by a piece of machinery. Nursing home staff assisting residents might be pulled or grabbed for balance. Slip fall accidents contribute a fair number of strains.

Report injuries immediately

Immediate injury evaluation and treatment determination are beneficial not only in ensuring a

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better recovery, but also in averting problems with workman's comp coverage. Delaying the reporting of injuries complicates care, and can result in denied claims. Things get confusing after a matter of days, details of the accident fade, and exactly what is causing the pain can become more complicated.

Although Colorado Labor Law requires on the job accidents to be reported within four days, (Section 8-43-102(1) and (1.5), Colorado Revised Statutes), Denzel suggests reporting any injury immediately, "It makes more sense for everybody involved if everything is done quickly."

Pinnacle Assurance published, in their 2nd quarter newsletter this year that claims reported 7 days after the date of injury cost 28% more than claims reported within 24 hours. Moreover, they listed the following benefits to reporting injuries with the first 24 hours:

- Workers benefit through prompt medical attention
- Return employees to work sooner
- Reduce the number of lost-time claims
- Reduce attorney involvement
- Lower overall costs
- Ensure timely accident investigations so potential hazards could be corrected

A patient's experience

For Betty Rosalez, who works in quality assurance for food safety at Swift & Company in Greeley, it all happened quickly. Just as she began B shift, she fell and dislocated her shoulder. Her employer called ahead, and when she arrived at Greeley Quick Care she was on her way to x-ray in minutes. The prescribed physical therapy, available right there in the office, did not produce the expected results; a subsequent MRI determined surgery was necessary to repair her rotator cuff.

"I only missed one full day of work. Surgery was scheduled for a Friday and I had the weekend to rest." Rosalez remained on light duty for months until therapy enabled her to regain strength and full use of her arm. Now fully recovered, she is able to do everything she could prior to her fall. She knows it is important to follow your doctor's instructions and restrictions and to practice physical therapy correctly.

"If an exercise was awkward, they showed me diagrams so I could understand. They talked to me, really explained everything to me. The atmosphere there was great; they do their best to communicate with you."

When it comes to workman's comp, injured employees and employers alike are the beneficiaries under Dr. Denzel's care.

Greeley Quick Care is located at 2928 W 10th Street in Greeley, CO 80634; call (970) 351-8181. Office hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, Saturday 9:00 am to 3:00 pm; they are on call Sundays. ■

Maryjo Faith Morgan is a freelance writer happy to be living in Loveland.

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