

For Immediate Release

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **El Duque has arthritis in his neck**

From the Associated Press is the news that the New York Mets All-Star pitcher, Orlando Hernandez, also known as “El Duque”, has arthritis in his neck and will be sidelined for three or four days after receiving a cortisone shot.

El Duque was penciled in to be the No. 2 starter behind Tom Glavine in the Mets’ suspect rotation. Since his treatment, he seems to be improving and will rejoin the team soon.

“Professional athletes are prone to developing arthritis and related conditions. The repetitive motion and impact of most professional sports takes its toll eventually,” states Dr. Nathan Wei.

“I read an interesting article that Ron Kroichick, a staff writer for the San Francisco Chronicle, did a few months ago. He interviewed 30 players from the 1981 San Francisco 49er championship team who ranged in age from 47 to 59. Twenty of those players cope with significant physical issues today, from arthritis to chronic back pain to joint replacements. Two (including legendary quarterback, Joe Montana) have had spinal fusion surgery, two have had knee replacements and one has had a shoulder replacement. Nine players said their doctors told them they eventually would need a joint replacement,” adds Dr. Wei.

“The most common type of arthritis ex-athletes cope with is osteoarthritis, a type of arthritis that is due to cartilage degeneration. Tendonitis and bursitis are also very common. Newer treatment modalities are allowing athletes to play longer and hopefully reduce their chances of crippling,” concludes Wei.

Dr. Wei is a board-certified rheumatologist and Clinical Director of the Arthritis and Osteoporosis Center of Maryland, a nationally respected arthritis research facility located in Frederick, Maryland.

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