

INhealth

A GOOD Sport

Outdoorsman returns to his passion following outpatient hip surgery

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As a result of his hip replacement operation, Scott Wills can more thoroughly enjoy fishing season.

Outdoorsman returns to his passion following outpatient hip surgery

An avid hunter and fisherman, Scott Wills looks forward every year to the warmer months when he can venture out into the wilderness to hunt and fish. But last year, the 57-year-old restaurant manager wasn't sure he would be able to pursue his outdoor passion for the first time in years.

"I'd been having pain and stiffness in my left hip for almost two years," recalls Scott. "I've been in the restaurant business for 30-plus years, spending 10 to 12 hours a day on my feet. After a while, everything had become difficult because of the deep bone pain that would come and go."

Scott's father had two hip replacements, so he knew that he was prone to osteoarthritis, a degenerative disease that leads to the eventual loss of joint cartilage. Although he knew it was time to do something about his hip, Scott didn't want to take time away from his busy restaurant job for a lengthy recovery. It was at that point that he began his search for a physician who could help him find a solution.

HUNTING FOR ANSWERS

After weeks of researching online and talking with friends, Scott found A. Brion Gardner, MD, an orthopedic surgeon with the nationally recognized Joint Replacement Program at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital. As soon as he met with Dr. Gardner, everything fell into place.

"When I first spoke with Dr. Gardner, he explained all my options. He has a very good bedside manner. He explains things well and he's very straightforward," says Scott.

Dr. Gardner recommended a conservative approach involving steroid injections to alleviate the pain. After a single injection, the pain vanished but returned in less than a week. Scott began taking 800 milligrams of ibuprofen daily to get through work, but he had concerns about the long-term effect of the pain medication. Having exhausted conservative therapies, Dr. Gardner recommended outpatient hip replacement, a solution that would solve Scott's hip trouble and allow him to return to work quickly.

"Scott was an ideal candidate for rapid recovery outpatient surgery," says Dr. Gardner. "Typically you want to make sure that someone undergoing rapid recovery surgery is physically capable of going home the same day. Scott was physically active beforehand, having run 5Ks and half marathons, so he was strong enough to get up and walk with crutches postoperatively. Plus, he wanted to return to his normal routine as quickly as possible,

so he was motivated to work diligently in the recovery room to go home and start outpatient physical therapy."

SWIFT RECOVERY

In January, Scott underwent an anterior hip replacement, a procedure that allows the muscles surrounding the hip joint to remain intact.

"The main advantages of this approach resulting in rapid recovery is you can leave the muscle intact during the procedure, and the patient doesn't have any limitations during their immediate postoperative recovery such as avoiding crossing their legs or bending over too far. There's less blood loss and therefore less need for blood transfusion," says Dr. Gardner. "There's also some evidence that suggests the overall pain immediately after surgery is less compared to the traditional posterior approach."

In addition, Dr. Gardner and his team used a special pain treatment regimen during and after the surgery that allows for a faster recovery than traditional general anesthesia followed by narcotics.

THE COUNTRYSIDE CALLS

For Scott, everything went according to plan. After spending six hours in the hospital, he went home and was able to walk and climb stairs using a walker. Within two days of his surgery, he began physical therapy three days a week. And just three weeks after the procedure, he was going to the gym.

Today, Scott is back to working full-time, which means being on his feet for 10 hours at a time five days a week.

"I feel better than I have in years," says Scott. "I can do everything I want to do and I'm really looking forward to hunting and fishing season."

No Pain, All Gain

The Joint Replacement Program at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital offers modern pain control to help patients return to their normal routine faster and with less discomfort following surgery.

"What we do now typically is a spinal anesthetic, which limits the amount of narcotic pain medication, decreasing postoperative nausea," explains orthopedic surgeon A. Brion Gardner, MD. "In conjunction with that, we also do a local injection inside the hip joint with a combination of an anti-inflammatory, morphine and epinephrine so when a patient wakes up in the recovery room they're not experiencing pain."

The result, says Dr. Gardner, is patients are up and walking around within hours of their surgery, enabling them to return home quicker and start physical therapy soon after surgery.

LEARN MORE

To schedule an appointment with the Inova Fair Oaks Hospital Joint Replacement Program, call **703.391.4555**.