

Getting Hip

Total hip replacement surgery has the potential to eradicate painful arthritic symptoms that have lasted for years.

Retired naturopathic physician Ingrid Hecht enjoys golf and swimming, but she was finding that a pain problem was slowing her down.

"I had pain in my groin for about six years, and then it went down into my right leg too," reports Ingrid. "It got so bad that I could hardly walk. At that time my husband was still living, and every morning we got up early and walked on the beach. I'd have to sit down, because I was in so much pain."

She began to consult various doctors, but that didn't help much.

Owen M. McCarthy, MD, P.A.

"They told me I had arthritis," she recalls. "They gave me pain medication, but that was about it."

Then an accidental fall made things much worse for Ingrid.

"One morning I went out in my front yard to pick up something, and my foot got hung up on a shrub," she describes. "I knew I was falling, but it was so slow that I decided to just fall on my side. From then on, the pain was unbearable, and I couldn't walk anymore. I tried to play golf, but I couldn't; I was in too much pain."

With her pain problem at a new level of severity, Ingrid visited the doctor with renewed urgency.

"I went to my general practitioner, Dr. V. U. Tran, whom I call my geriatric doctor," she says. "He sent me for an x-ray, and when the x-ray came back I could see that my right hip was completely worn out."

In April 2006 Dr. Tran referred her to board-certified orthopaedic surgeon Owen M. McCarthy, MD.

"I told Dr. McCarthy that I wanted to play golf again, be able to walk again, and be without pain. I asked him if he could help me, and he said, *Yes, I can.*"

Who is a candidate?

The hip joint consists of a ball located at the upper end of the thighbone, or femur, that fits inside the socket of the pelvic bone, explains Dr. McCarthy. "The bone end and socket are covered with smooth cartilage tissue, which allows the joint to move efficiently and painlessly. However, when cartilage is worn away due to injury, arthritis, or wear and tear from overuse, bone can rub against bone, causing pain and stiffness.

"As we live longer — and consequently walk many more miles — we put considerable wear and tear on this joint.

When the cartilage that normally cushions and protects the joint breaks down, the normal gliding motion is lost. The resultant grinding and stress cause excruciating pain, making movement difficult or even impossible."

Dr. McCarthy explains that a clinical examination

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of the patient and x-rays or an MRI when appropriate can determine if severe arthritis is present in the joint. Based on his extensive experience, Dr. McCarthy can then review the findings to assess the need for a total joint replacement.

"Ingrid's ability to move freely and to keep up with the pace of her daily activities had been curtailed due to the extent of the deterioration in her hip," notes Dr. McCarthy. "The dysfunction in the joint was so advanced that we didn't believe medications, rest, or walking aids would be able to satisfactorily get her back on her feet and maintain her lifestyle. Consequently, we recommended hip replacement."

Dr. McCarthy notes that for highly active patients like Ingrid, a metal-on-metal hip replacement is often the best option.

"The accumulation of debris from cement and plastic can cause osteolysis, which means disintegration of bone," says the doctor. "It creates a cavity, like a cavity in the tooth. Metal on metal appears to have advantages over other types. It's extremely sturdy, it's less likely to dislocate, and the wear is better, both for larger patients and for highly active patients like Ingrid.

"Also, the femoral head of the metal-on-metal prosthesis is larger than the standard version. The advantages of a larger femoral head are that it appears to create less debris in the joint, has less tendency to dislocate, and provides a better range of motion.

"If I had to have a total hip replacement, I'd most likely choose the metal-on-metal prosthesis myself."

No more pain

Ingrid says she appreciated Dr. McCarthy's candor.

"He was very matter of fact," she recalls. "He suggested the hip replacement and told me I'd be able to walk and play golf again. I said, *Please, do it as soon as possible. I'm 80 years old, and I want to enjoy my life.*"

The experience of the surgery was not as difficult as Ingrid had anticipated.

"I had broken my ankle many years ago, and I have a plate and screws in there," she says. "This surgery experience was about the same as that one.

"The people at South Bay Hospital treated me very well. I was only there for five days, and then I had rehab right away. The next morning they asked me to get up, and they had me walk with my walker while putting very little weight on the right leg. I managed, because I knew I had to move it to get it to heal properly."

Now that she's had time to recover, Ingrid says the transition back to her active lifestyle has been a smooth one.

"It's wonderful: I go swimming every morning, and I'm also golfing again," she marvels. "I can overdo it, if I walk too much or go up and down a hill when I'm playing a lot of golf, so once in a while I feel something. But it's no comparison with what I suffered before."

Above all, she is thankful for her experience with Dr. McCarthy and his staff.

"The people there are so helpful, and they're very friendly," she assures. "And they're always on time, so I never had to

"I have no pain," says Ingrid after successful hip replacement surgery.

wait. Dr. McCarthy is trustworthy, and whenever I had to see him he was willing to help me.

"In fact, I went out a little too early to play golf, and I hurt my knee," she confides. "I went back to Dr. McCarthy, and he gave me an injection, told me to rest it, and now it's perfectly all right.

"All my pain is gone. It's absolutely fantastic."

FHCN—Michael J. Sabno

Painful problems? State-of-the-art solutions!

Dr. McCarthy welcomes all calls regarding this article as well as other orthopedic topics. His offices are in Bradenton, located at **4701 Manatee Ave. West, phone (941) 795-3844**, and in Sun City Center, located at **4020 SR 674, phone toll-free (800) 595-3844**. For additional information or to schedule an appointment, please call the office nearest you.



Owen M. McCarthy, MD, is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon and is a member of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. He received his undergraduate and medical degrees from Georgetown University, Washington, DC. Dr. McCarthy completed his internship at St. Vincent's Hospital, New York City, followed by a general surgery residency at Grady Memorial Hospital, Atlanta, GA. His served his orthopedic residencies at Bellevue—New York University Hospital, New York City. Dr. McCarthy is on staff at Manatee Memorial Hospital, Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, and Columbia L.W. Blake Hospital, all in Bradenton, and Columbia South Bay Hospital in Sun City Center.

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