

A JOURNEY TO WELLNESS

May 2010



A PATIENT'S STORY

BY BARBARA FAZENBAKER

What a difference a total left hip replacement has made in my life! It took me about 10 years to make the decision to have surgery. My family had nearly given up trying to convince me and the physical therapist was about ready to hit me over the head (literally), but I finally reached the point where I couldn't walk any longer. I was "bone on bone".

I had walked with a slight limp for years but I dismissed the limp as just getting older and because of the constant walking I did at my job. After all, I was only in my late 40's/early 50's. Boy was I wrong!

I was born with congenital hip dislocation, but I never realized it until later in life. Fortunately, I never had any pain -- my muscles tightened up and protected me. I learned to improvise with my own distinct walk.

Finally, I made an appointment with a physical therapist. I used the warm water tanks, worked on machines and the therapist would stretch me. I regained a little bit of mobility back and was able to walk better, but this was not the solution. My therapist suggested Dr. DiGioia. Some of her patients had already been operated on by Dr. DiGioia and they had achieved great results.

I made an appointment with Dr. DiGioia and decided to try a hip injection first so I would have an idea of how a hip replacement would feel. The injection did help get me through a vacation in Las Vegas. It did help me to walk up and down the Strip, but once I started walking, I had to keep going - (If I sat too long I'd get "frozen hips").

Six months later, I scheduled my surgery. At the pre-testing visit, everyone I met was so nice and very knowledgeable of the process I was about to go through. Any question or concern I had was answered.

The surgery was not bad at all. I was wide awake and alert afterwards and my sister who had come down with me stayed for the afternoon so we could answer the many phone calls back home from the concerned and inquisitive.

I attended two physical therapy sessions the day after my surgery. The staff was very skilled in showing me how to get around and how to correctly do the exercises.



Barbara Fazzenbaker shows off the mobility she has with her "new hip" while having some fun at Kill Devil Hills in the Outer Banks.



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I went to two more PT sessions on the day of my discharge before I left the hospital. I had also started doing my exercises two weeks prior to my surgery and I feel that makes a big difference in the recovery process!

The doctors, nurses and all of the staff on the fourth floor were great. They were very supportive and knowledgeable. If you needed anything, they were there. I especially like ordering off the menu for the next day's breakfast.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT A STORY AND SHARE YOUR "JOURNEY TO WELLNESS," PLEASE CONTACT

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Upon leaving the hospital, I opted to stay with the walker for about a week. I felt if I started to use a cane, I would begin favoring my one side which I had done previously. During the next 2-3 weeks, I occasionally used a cane.

I started in-patient physical therapy the day after I got home from the hospital (for 5 days) followed by out-patient therapy. I went to out-patient therapy 3 days a week for about 5 weeks and I did two sets of exercises at home on the days I didn't go.

In addition, I regret not purchasing one of the dressing-aid kits from the hospital. I had to do a little bit of scrambling later on. I strongly suggest getting one of those kits before leaving the hospital.

I returned to work 8 weeks after my surgery. I walk between 3-5 miles a day and sometimes at a very fast pace. I had to be ready for it.

Since my surgery, I have been to New York City, where we walked all over the place, riding subways, getting into Central Park, walking up to the second floor of Bubba Gumps in Times Square and basically walking wherever I wanted to.

I also drove my friends and myself to the Outer Banks where we climbed the steps in the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, constantly walked the beach and even ferried over to Ocrakoke Island for the day. What a difference it



After some site-seeing, Barbara and her friends savor a quick rest on the steps of the Orville and Wilbur Wright Monument.



Nothing is more relaxing and peaceful than a walk along the beach in North Carolina.

makes when you can get around well and without any pain. I never realized how much I could do and all the fun things I had been missing out on. I had definitely let the problems with my hip go on too long!

I would have never achieved my end result, had it not been for Dr. DiGioia and his team. I strongly recommend them for anyone considering surgery. I will be forever grateful!

I still continue to work out on weight machines at my physical therapists at least twice a week. I work the "old hip" as well as the "new hip" on the hip abductor machine.

I'll be going somewhere on vacation again this summer as soon as my friends and I can agree on the same place. One thing I do know, I won't have any trouble getting around when I get there!

Sincerely,

~ **Barbara Fazenbaker**



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