



JOINT REPLACEMENT SURGERY

Anita Demaline had her hip replaced on a Tuesday. By Wednesday, she was walking to lunch and dinner down the hall from her room. She was in her own home on Friday morning.



by **KenMcEntee**
Contributing Writer

Just four months ago, the thought of having to squeeze into a car was enough to bring Anita Demaline to tears. The 79-year-old grandmother from Brunswick had put up with severe arthritis in her left hip for years, yet hesitated to undergo hip replacement surgery.

“I was a coward,” Anita admits. “I was afraid to have surgery. So I put up with the pain much longer than I should have.”

After having her hip replaced at Southwest General’s Orthopedic Joint Center (OJC) in May, Anita is enjoying her life again—driving herself to lunch and shopping, and spending time with her grandchildren.

“Had I known it would be this easy, I would have done it a long time ago,” Anita says. “I wish I had known about this years ago. It’s really unbelievable.”

The OJC offers shorter hospital stays and faster recovery for knee and hip replacement patients compared to traditional programs. Patients are out of bed and beginning therapy soon after surgery, while in the hospital. Patients also enjoy the luxury of private rooms during their stay.

Most patients spend just three nights

in the hospital following surgery, then go through outpatient physical therapy that lets them make a full recovery in the familiar setting of their homes.

“My kids were nagging me to get my hip taken care of for years,” Anita recalls. “Finally, after I just couldn’t take the pain any longer, I went to see Dr. Mark Panigutti, who told me about the procedure. The people at Southwest gave me all kinds of literature that explained step-by-step everything that was going to happen. A small group of other replacement patients and I met with the staff, who answered all of our questions, no matter how silly they were. They made us very comfortable. They were fantastic.”

“My kids were nagging me to get my hip taken care of for years.”

Anita had her hip replacement done on a Tuesday. By Wednesday, with the help of a walker and the support of the OJC staff, she was walking to lunch and dinner down the hall from her room. She was in her own home on Friday morning.

“It actually took a couple days for me to realize that the pain that I lived with for so

many years was completely gone,” she says. “It was such a difference.”

“After four weeks I was off the walker and using a cane,” she says. “Two or three days later I no longer needed the cane and I was going shopping. I never dreamed it could be this easy. When I first read the literature, I was still skeptical. But it worked just the way they said it would.”

The OJC program emphasizes extensive education before and after surgery to let patients know what to expect. That way, they can properly prepare and participate fully in the recovery process. The team, which includes board-certified orthopedic surgeons, experienced orthopedic nurses and physical and occupational therapists with special training in orthopedics, provides each patient with individual attention from pre-surgery education through post-surgery rehabilitation.

Additionally through LifeWorks of Southwest General, the hospital’s health and fitness center, Southwest General offers programs to help people prepare for joint replacement surgery or to build on their fitness after finishing outpatient physical therapy.

LifeWorks’ warm water pool is especially helpful for arthritis sufferers and joint

replacement patients.

“I am old,” Anita exaggerates. “And it is amazing what I am able to do since I had the surgery done. Imagine what younger people would do if they had this operation. It is wonderful. I wish everybody who is going through the pain I went through would realize that this option is available.”

Southwest General’s Orthopedic Joint Center offers shorter hospital stays and faster recovery on knee and hip replacement patients compared to traditional programs.

For more information about Orthopedic Services offered at Southwest General, call Health Connection at 440-816-5050.



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