

He's hip to new procedures Redding man opts for less invasive hip resurfacing

By Nanci G. Hutson
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Joseph Periera of Redding is happiest when he is hiking, beachcombing or fly-fishing in some remote, faraway place where his only company are birds, fish and grizzly bears.

So when an arthritic right hip kept him from even taking out the trash, the retired pharmaceutical company executive decided he needed hip repair.

But what method would ensure him the 64-year-old avid outdoorsman the best long-term mobility? His choices were a traditional hip replacement, which required removal of the upper part of the bone, or an alternative known as hip resurfacing.

The latter preserves the bone and reshapes and refits it around a metal ball the size of a plum, which then fits into a metal socket.

"I wanted control over what was going to happen," said Periera, a widower and grandfather.

After extensive research into new technologies, he decided his best bet was a hip resurfacing procedure and implant that has been popular in Europe for a decade and last year was reintroduced and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

In October, he attended a medical town meeting at Danbury Hospital, where Dr. Robert Deveney of Danbury Orthopedic Associates, co-chairman of the hospital's Joint Replacement Program, discussed both the benefits and drawbacks of the technique.

After peppering Deveney with questions, Periera was satisfied Deveney had the expertise to implant the device, which is made in Birmingham, England.

Cost for hip resurfacing, about \$25,000, is comparable to traditional replacement, and many insurance plans will cover the expense.

On Feb. 23, Periera had the surgery. A week later, he was discharged and already he is planning a spring trip with his adult sons, Joe and Greg, to a fishing camp on Kodiak Island in Alaska.

"Even with the surgery pain, I'm walking better than the day I came in here," Periera said, adding the day after surgery he had less pain than when he arrived.

"There's just been so much of an improvement. Soon, I won't need a cane or a walker. I'll



Joseph Pereira holds a device similar to the one implanted in him during a hip resurfacing procedure performed by Dr. Robert Deveney at Danbury Hospital.

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be able to take a walk in the woods or on the beach."

For Deveney, Periera's delight is the ultimate payoff for his extensive training for hip resurfacing -- which may prove to be a more durable hip repair for younger patients, particularly runners or athletes.

Deveney praises more traditional hip replacements done through minimally invasive surgeries, with patients able to resume many of their activities within two or three weeks.

"They're outstanding," said Deveney, who specializes in hip and knee replacements.

But traditional replacements tend to wear out within 10 to 15 years, and patients are advised against participating in running sports, he said.

Resurfacing for men 65 and younger and women 55 and younger has no such restrictions, he said.

The procedure preserves much of the bone, so patients have more options later in life should their condition deteriorate and they need complete hip replacement, Deveney said.

With hip resurfacing, the chance of dislocation is less than with traditional replacement. After a traditional replacement, one in 100 patients will experience dislocation; in hip resurfacing the statistic is one in 1,000, he said.

"We want patients to be able to have an unlimited activity level so they can return to what they want to do."

Deveney is confident the hip resurfacing procedure is not only safe but is a better choice for certain patients. In the United States, some 500,000 hip replacements are done annually, with that number expected to increase 600 percent over the next 20 years, he said.

Periera is satisfied with his decision. Without his resurfaced hip, a trek into the wilds of Alaska to fly-fish with the grizzlies would have been too risky.

Now he is preparing for what he intends to be a few pleasant weeks of glacial solitude.

If he gets too close to the bears?

"Now if Joe has to run, he can," Deveney teased.