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KEEPING IN STEP

Jerry McMullen | Streator

Jerry McMullen loves his early morning walks – a 30 block stroll every morning through the neighborhoods surrounding the Streator home he shares with his wife, Janice. Often walking before sunrise, Jerry enjoys the sights, sounds, and smells of hearing Streator wake up and come to life.

But late last fall, the walks came to an abrupt stop. The mild pain he had felt in his right hip suddenly became severe, and he couldn't walk more than a short distance, let alone 30 blocks. As Jerry explained, "I started those walks a year after I retired from GE Plastics 29 years ago. They're not something I wanted to give up. I wanted to get back to them as soon as I could."

He asked for advice from his daughter-in-law, Sandy, who recommended a call to OSF Medical Group – Orthopedics in Pontiac. "I didn't know either Dr. Lowe or Dr. Sipe, of course," said Jerry. "But I wanted to go someplace nearby, and I knew they're both young surgeons, which means they're up-to-speed on the modern procedures and new information."

First things first

Jerry and Janice met with Dr. Jeff Lowe and after a few x-rays and routine tests, his hip replacement surgery was scheduled for December 1. Jerry was a good candidate for an anterior approach hip replacement – a tissue-sparing alternative to traditional hip replacement surgery, with less pain, faster recovery, and improved mobility.

"Jerry had a deterioration of his hip joint due to avascular necrosis, which means the bone wasn't getting the blood flow it used to get," said Dr. Lowe. "For some patients, it's a natural consequence of aging, or it can result from an injury to the hip or even some medications."

Jerry and Janice were put at ease the first time they met with Dr. Lowe. "He wasn't all business. He was easy to talk to," said Jerry. "I like to get to know my patients first," explains Dr. Lowe. "It's part of my process, to help them feel like they know me, too. And it's important to know what's going on in their lives, so we can provide the best care for them."

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

January 2014 – January 2015: 865 orthopedic surgeries at OSF Saint James, including:



Surveys received October - December 2014:

98.4% of Dr. Sipe and Dr. Lowe's inpatients rated their overall experience as "good" or "very good"

"The team at OSF Saint James provides very safe and high quality care, earning us national recognition from independent organizations," added Dr. Lowe. "Everyone takes the necessary steps before, during, and after surgery to give very safe and high-quality care. I'd be confident with my own family having surgery here."



Janice and Jerry McMullen | Streator

Knowing what to expect

OSF Saint James provides a class for joint replacement patients and their at-home caregivers, so they can learn about the surgery, what will happen in the hospital, and what to do after returning home. Mary Heath, Director of Education at OSF Saint James and coordinator of the class, remembers the McMullen's well. "I remember their attentiveness. They were well prepared.

"Many patients come to class wondering why they need a class before this surgery. They almost always leave feeling grateful for the information. Often, there are questions answered they didn't even know they needed to ask," added Mary.

The big day arrives

From their arrival at OSF Saint James on December 1 to Jerry's discharge on December 4, "everything was a smooth process," says Janice. "We liked the electronic display board in the waiting room that told us where Jerry was in the surgery process, and a nurse called us from the operating room to give us updates," said Janice.

Once he returned to his room, Jerry was impressed with the care he received from the nursing staff and says they always told him what to expect each day. "They were all very friendly and had a good sense of humor," he added. He experienced only a little pain, which was relieved easily with medication.

Physical therapist at OSF Saint James and Streator native, Erin Baker, started working with Jerry right away. "Jerry did very well with physical therapy during his hospital stay. He was able to walk around his room the morning after surgery and was walking out in the halls that afternoon. Each day he continued to make improvements," reported Erin.

Occupational therapist, Allison Hooper, and occupational therapy assistant, Becky Dotterer, taught Jerry how to accomplish routine tasks at home while

recovering with his new hip joint. Said Allison, "My goal for joint replacement patients is to get them back to independence as soon as possible. We want them to go home able to safely perform their own self-care and maneuver around without falling."

Jerry hopes his story will make others feel better about getting a joint replacement so they can continue with the activities they love, too. "Everything was so good, I can't think of a reason why someone wouldn't call the OSF orthopedic surgeons and have their surgery at OSF Saint James," said Jerry.

THE ORTHOPEDIC PATIENT EXPERIENCE AT OSF SAINT JAMES

- Redecorated patient rooms
- Updated showers
- Experienced surgical and post-surgical care teams
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Independence Square therapy area
- Multi-disciplinary patient education program
- Free Wi-Fi

For more information about OSF Medical Group – Orthopedics in Pontiac, call (815) 844-4062. To ask about services at OSF Saint James, please call (815) 842-6815.