

New Procedure Speeds Hip Replacement Recovery

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PORTLAND (NEWS CENTER) -- Hip replacement surgery normally requires a person to spend several days in the hospital and sometimes up to a year in rehab.

A new procedure is changing that outcome dramatically. Patients are able to get up and walk just hours after surgery.

To call Mary Ann Brown "active" in an understatement. Besides walking, the 69-year old loves hiking and pilates; which became increasingly difficult after osteoarthritis settled into her right hip.

To ease the pain Brown took medication but she finally decided to have her hip replaced and she was worried.

"I didn't want to be down for a long time. I had heard for a lot of people it takes six months to a year sometimes or more to get over this," said Brown. But then Brown discovered a new procedure known as the "24 hour hip".

The technique was perfected by Dr. George Babikian, both a general and orthopedic surgeon. Dr. Babikian says traditional hip replacement involves cutting through largest muscles in the hip.

"We have to take three muscles off the back hip and then open this tendon," says Babikian.

Dr. Babikian's procedure involves making a small incision in front of the hip, which allows him to work between the muscles. He says leaving the muscles intact means less pain and a much shorter recovery. It also significantly reduces the risk of dislocation in the future.

The majority of Babikian's patients go home the next day, a third only need Tylenol for their pain.

Brown was amazed at what she could do only a few hours after surgery. "I was back in my room at 12:30, had lunch at 2:00 and walked up and down the hall with a walker," said Brown.

Brown says within 24 hours of the procedure she was walking up the stairs. In a couple weeks she was back to

teaching pilates and now nearly two months later she has resumed her active lifestyle.

In the past three years, Dr. Babikian has performed 700 similar procedures, both at this outpatient surgery center and Maine Medical Center. His patients range from a 96-year old to a person who weighed more than 400 pounds. Patients have come from as far away as Washington state because Dr. Babikian is only one of a few surgeons in the U.S. who are performing the procedure.

If you would like more information on the "24 hour hip" you can check out www.orthoassociates.com.

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