



A New Surgery Allows a Man to Honor His Father-in-Law

Bradley Poster, after hip surgery, ran the New York City marathon and raised over \$3,000 to fight cancer

In the spring of 2002, Bradley Poster, a veteran of 37 marathons, was having trouble walking, let alone running. His doctor recommended a conventional hip replacement, but for a man in his late 40s, he was worried he wouldn't be able to return to his active lifestyle.

“Walking was getting difficult and the doctor said I needed a hip replacement,” said Mr. Poster, who lives in Marlboro, Vermont. “But I was in denial. Instead of running, I started cycling, doing century and endurance rides.”

But Mr. Poster, who used to run four or five marathons a year, wanted to return to running. He did some research on another option, hip resurfacing. On the Web site www.surfacehippy.info, Mr. Poster found information about Edwin Su, M.D, assistant attending orthopedic surgeon at Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City, who began participating in hip resurfacing clinical trials in 2004.

A second option

The hip is a ball and socket joint, with the ball at the top of the thighbone covered in cartilage that helps the joint operate smoothly. If the cartilage is damaged, the bone from the thighbone rubs against the hip socket in the pelvis causing pain and inflammation. Hip replacement surgery removes the top of the thighbone and puts a metal stem and ball in its place. Hip resurfacing aims to conserve more of the thighbone, only placing a metal cap on the ball. Both surgeries, however, bring pain relief and increased mobility to the patient.

Although hip resurfacing has been used by surgeons in the United Kingdom since 1997, it was only approved in the United States in May 2006.

The main advantage to the resurfacing is the conserved bone. “A hip replacement works great, but for younger, more active people like Mr. Poster, there is a greater risk it will wear out and they will need

another operation,” said Dr. Su. “Hip resurfacing allows for hip replacement surgery to continue being an option later on because so much of the original bone is conserved.”

“When I met Dr. Su, everything about him was exactly what I wanted,” said Mr. Poster, who is 52. He was initially on a waiting list for surgery in January 2007, but a cancelation put him in the operating room three months ahead of time, in November 2006.

Motivated by a cause

“The whole experience of the surgery was great, the staff at HSS really took care of me,” said Mr. Poster. “I finally realized the extent of the pain I had been living with, and now it is gone.”

Mr. Poster originally had some swelling, but the movement restrictions were gone. He could do everything by himself. “It was like I was relearning how to use my body,” he said.

For the five days immediately following his release from the hospital, Mr. Poster stayed with his in-laws in New York City. His father-in-law Jules Olitski, an admired American abstract painter, was at the time undergoing chemotherapy.

“What I was dealing with seemed so manageable compared to what he was going through,” said Mr. Poster. Mr. Olitski passed away in February, 2007 which motivated Mr. Poster to begin training for this year’s New York City Marathon with Fred’s Team, a charity group that raises money for cancer research. So far he has raised over \$3,000.

“I had never expected to run again, and when I saw Dr. Su, he said he didn’t know if I could do it,” said Mr. Poster. “But my father-in-law really inspired me, and I knew that it would be something he would like. Running a marathon is like a work of art, you go through so many emotions during the race it becomes an event.”

Though hip resurfacing does allow for the patient to return to a certain athletic level; running a marathon is not what is normally suggested. “I have reservations about patients doing the level of activity that Mr. Poster was sustaining, it is still not known how the materials from the surgery will hold up,” said Dr. Su. “I voiced my concerns to him, but in the end he made his own decision.”

After the race

Just a year after having hip resurfacing, Mr. Poster finished the New York City marathon in under four hours.

“People had told me that the results after surgery were really hard to believe,” said Mr. Poster. “It was as if I finally realized how much pain I had been living with for so long and now it was gone. I was able to move in a way that I hadn’t been in so long. I encourage everyone who is having hip pain to consider this surgery.”

With informational Web sites now appearing, such as the one where Mr. Poster found Dr. Su, the operation is becoming more widely sought out. Dr. Su said he is already performing more than 250 hip resurfacing surgeries a year and he agrees with Mr. Poster that there is no reason people should live in pain.

“For certain people, I know that, like Mr. Poster, they are holding off from treating their hip pain because they feel that hip replacement is too extensive,” said Dr. Su. “I hope they realize that that is not their only option and that they can live a pain-free, active life.”

About Hospital for Special Surgery

Founded in 1863, Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) is a world leader in orthopedics, rheumatology and rehabilitation. HSS is nationally ranked as No. 1 in orthopedics, No. 3 in rheumatology by *U.S. News & World Report*, and has received Magnet Recognition for Excellence in Nursing Service from the American Nurses Credentialing Center. In the 2006 edition of HealthGrades’ *Hospital Quality in America Study*, HSS received five-star ratings for clinical excellence in its specialties. A member of the New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System and an affiliate of Weil Cornell Medical College, HSS provides orthopedic and rheumatologic patient care at New York-Presbyterian Hospital at New York Weill Cornell Medical Center. All Hospital for Special Surgery medical staff are on the faculty of Weil Cornell Medical College. The hospital’s research division is internationally recognized as a leader in the investigation of musculoskeletal and autoimmune diseases. [Hospital for Special Surgery](http://www.hss.edu) is located in New York City and online at www.hss.edu.

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