

Facing Surgery. Afraid & Alone

By Carla Griffin

I knew that something was wrong with my hip in January. I went to many doctors and was told that I had “bone-on-bone” caused by arthritis but no one said how bad it was. Or that I should have a hip replacement.

Besides living alone, I don't have any family in the San Francisco area. Plus I needed to work so I just continued to hobble around—praying that the pain would go away. It didn't.

In late July, I was finally referred to the Bay Area's best joint replacement surgeon and he wanted to do surgery as soon as they could work me into his schedule.

That is when the FEAR set in! I didn't know what to expect since I had never had surgery before. Then I fell—which put me into a hospital bed in my living room for four weeks while I waited for the surgery.

During this waiting period, I had many medical equipment pieces brought in to assist me. But I still needed to hire someone to come in every day and make my meals as I could no longer lift anything.

On the day of the surgery, a friend packed a bag for me and I was taken out in a wheelchair to a waiting car and off to the hospital. Lucky for me that my fear “blocked out” all that happened at the hospital including surgery.

I woke up the next morning in the Joint Replacement ward at Good Samaritan Hospital in San Jose, CA with nurses and the doctor at my bedside.

They said it was time to “get up and walk.”

I did it slowly and to my surpris—no pain! Then off to physical therapy for an hour. Since I had lost so much strength during the four weeks leading up to surgery, I was slow but doing it.

Every day, I developed more strength and yet, I didn't want to go home because I was afraid to be alone and still not strong enough to take care of myself.

Upon the advice of my doctor, I was moved to *The Terraces of Los Gatos*' skilled nursing facility for seven days. The physical therapists, occupational therapist and the nurses were outstanding. By day seven, I was ready to go home and begin living again.



But my treatment wasn't over. ProHealth Homecare came the day after I was home. A nurse and physical therapist worked with me for two weeks before I was released for out-patient therapy at Silver Creek Physical Therapy for six weeks since I was driving again.

While at *The Terraces*, however, I went into a depression and that continued well into my physical therapy with Silver Creek. Once my energy returned, the depression left!

Today, I'm doing extremely well and have enough strength back in my hip to return to my Pilate Reformer classes that I have enjoyed for many years.

Looking back on my experience, I would definitely do hip surgery again and sooner—without the fear and apprehension experienced before.

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