

HEALTH REPORT



Stemless shoulder replacement gives renewed hope to active people managing arthritis

"I didn't even know you could replace a shoulder," Charles Harris told me when I spoke to him about his recent operation.

After years of wear and tear, including a long and distinguished career in the United States Coast Guard, Mr. Harris experienced intense and progressive pain in his collarbone area that limited his range of motion, his ability to indulge his love of sailing,

and the time he spent playing with his 8-year-old grandson. His x-rays showed that arthritis was present and needed to be repaired if Mr. Harris was to get back to the lifestyle he loved.

In November 2015, Mr. Harris met Dr. Cyrus Press, an orthopedic surgeon at NoVa Orthopedic and Spine Care, a division of The Centers for Advanced Orthopaedics, who performs shoulder

replacement surgeries at Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center. At that meeting, Mr. Harris learned that he was a candidate for an innovative new procedure called a stemless shoulder replacement. If Mr. Harris agreed to the procedure, he would be the first patient in Northern Virginia to receive it.

Stemless shoulder replacement is ideal for younger, more active patients like Mr. Harris. It provides an option to traditional shoulder replacements that reduces recovery time, lowers the risk of complications, and decreases post-operative pain because less native bone is disturbed. Many patients who are younger and more active who have traditional shoulder replacements may require future revision because the components either wear out or become loose.

If a future surgical revision is needed, having adequate bone quantity and quality are critical. Stemless shoulder replacement is the next leap forward in shoulder surgery because it eliminates the stem altogether. By utilizing these stemless shoulder replacements, additional bone is not disturbed and provides a higher likelihood of successful revision surgery.

Additionally, the elimination of the need for a stem means that patients who have deformities of their bone in this area from a previous fracture or injury are not limited should they need a replacement. Since the prosthesis leaves the canal untouched, surgery can be performed in complex deformity cases without the added complexity of dealing with a previously injured bone.

"I am excited about this new technology because it provides me an innovative new option that I can discuss with my patients who suffer from shoulder arthritis," said Dr. Press. "Being able to offer my patients the ideal surgery for their specific problem gives me great satisfaction and provides the patient the best opportunity to have a successful outcome."

After extensive research about his options for shoulder replacement procedures, as well as orthopedic surgeons, Mr. Harris scheduled his stemless shoulder replacement with Dr. Press for December 3, 2015.

"I liked him right from the start," Mr. Harris says of Dr. Press. "I did my research on him, asked around to find out what kind of guy and what kind of surgeon he is, and I heard nothing but praise. Everyone told me, 'He's the best.' And I've absolutely found that to be true. Dr. Press is both a remarkable surgeon and a great man."

Immediately following the surgery, Dr. Press visited Mr. Harris in his hospital room to see how he felt post-surgery.

"That meant a lot to me," said Mr. Harris. "He was genuinely concerned with how I was doing. Not only as a patient, but also as a person. And that showed me that he's every bit as good as people told me he was."

Mr. Harris was amazed that he felt no pain from the incision itself, which was the pain he worried about most. The surgery was so successful that Mr. Harris went home on the afternoon of December 4th.

"I certainly had pain, and I knew I'd have to have a lot of physical therapy to get my range of motion and strength back," said Mr. Harris. "But I was very hopeful."

He started physical therapy two weeks after the procedure. Now four months after the procedure, his range of motion is back to about 75%-80%. Regaining the strength in his shoulder is a bit slower, but it's happening. Mr. Harris is very diligent about his rehab. He still goes to physical therapy once per week and spends at least 30-45 minutes each day doing exercises prescribed by his physical therapist.

"I knew the strength would come back slower than the range of motion," said Mr. Harris. "And, yes, that's frustrating, but I honestly don't feel that inconvenienced. I'm very focused on my recovery. I know I'll be sailing this summer and throwing around the football with my grandson."

Though stemless shoulder replacement was the ideal procedure for Mr. Harris, not all patients are candidates for this procedure. Stemless shoulder replacements are not an ideal option for patients who have advanced osteoporosis. Since the prosthesis is not being placed into the bone canal, it relies on the quality of the bone around it to obtain a secure fit. Patients who have advanced osteoporosis already have bones that are of a compromised quality. That lower quality of the existing bone can compromise the quality of the fixation, rendering the procedure unsuccessful.

Because stemless shoulder replacement is such a new procedure, it is critical to find a medical center that has the expertise and experience necessary to make this type of surgery successful. Patients who elect to have the procedure at the Sentara OrthoJoint Center benefit from specially trained nurses, therapists, and technicians. This new procedure further demonstrates Sentara's unwavering commitment to providing the highest quality care for the Northern Virginia community.

About this section: This special advertising section was prepared by independent writer Christa Rose Avampato. The production of this section did not involve the news or editorial staff of The Washington Post.

"I go sailing in the summer, so I wanted to get my shoulder fixed in time to recover for this season."

Charles Harris

Charles Harris, Patient
Sentara Northern Virginia
Medical Center Orthopedics

Sailing free with new stemless shoulder replacement

- Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center now offers Stemless Shoulder Replacement which bridges the gap between traditional stemmed shoulder replacement and resurfacing shoulder implants.
- Stemless Shoulder Replacement provides younger, more active patients with additional surgical options for their osteoarthritic shoulder pain.

Patients who elect to receive this procedure benefit from specially-trained nurses, therapists and technicians at the Sentara OrthoJoint Center.

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