

# Pioneering new hip replacement operation

A technically challenging but less invasive hip replacement operation has arrived in the UK and is set to have a huge impact on patient care

**A** pioneering new hip replacement operation will see patients back on their feet just a day after surgery, a leading hospital has confirmed.

Mr Marcellino Maheson, a consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Spire Cardiff Hospital who specialises exclusively in hip surgery, says the operation will dramatically reduce overall recovery time.

He spent time training with experts in France, Switzerland, Austria and USA to learn the anterior approach to hip replacement which is already used extensively outside the United Kingdom.

He said: "Traditionally hip replacements have been one of the most successful operations a human can undergo.

"But because of the deep position of the hip joint they have required the surgeon to cut through the muscles.

"This adds to the post-operative pain experienced and the cut muscles require considerable time to recover fully.

"These operations normally see patients in hospital for three to five days, followed by five to eight weeks on crutches."

Mr Maheson said the anterior approach avoids cutting into any muscle by going through the front of the hip.

But he said it is a more technically-challenging operation because of the limited access to the joint.

He added: "This means unless surgeons have had full training it could potentially lead to a higher level of complications. This is why it hasn't been adopted widely in the UK so far.



► Mr Marcellino Maheson, consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Spire Cardiff Hospital, carrying out the new hip replacement operation

"Some people think that you need to use an experimental hip prosthesis because it is a minimally invasive technique. We only use well-established hip replacements during these operations."

He said a patient audit at Spire Cardiff Hospital had revealed that, on average, patients generally go home after an overnight stay, and come off

their crutches in under half the time of a traditional hip replacement.

"The technique saves time and money in hospital care costs and also gives the patient more freedom immediately, as there are far fewer restrictions on their home life or activities after the operation, unlike a traditional hip operation," he said.

Spire Cardiff Hospital and Univer-

sity Hospital Llandough, are currently the only centres in Wales offering the anterior approach to hip replacement, with around four other centres in England also offering it.

However, Mr Maheson is working with the other surgeons in England to form an expert working group to identify which types of patients will particularly benefit from the new

approach. He said: "We want to make sure this technique is adopted safely which is why we have been auditing our results very carefully.

"We are now looking to set up training programmes to help other surgeons learn the technique safely - we want to develop a new nationwide training initiative to help share the expertise."

## PANEL HEADLINE

A DEDICATED runner for 50 years, Derek Coe knew something was wrong when he was gearing up for the London Marathon and required constant physiotherapy just to make it to the starting line.

Despite completing the marathon successfully in 2010, Derek spent the next couple of years struggling even to walk without extreme discomfort.

The retired chartered quantity surveyor, from Monmouth, was diagnosed with arthritis and told he required a hip replacement.

He said: "I had always been really fit and active and had been road running for 50 years, but I had to stop three years ago. It got gradually worse to the point when even walking was extremely uncomfortable.

"When I was told I needed a hip replacement, I did some research into all of the techniques available.

"I came across Mr Maheson at Spire Cardiff, and his innovative anterior approach. I read a lot of research papers from America on the approach and it seemed to really fit what I was looking for, so I booked a consultation with him."

The 68-year-old was admitted to Spire Cardiff Hospital for the operation and was amazed at the speed of the process:

7.30am - admitted to hospital  
8.30am - operation carried out  
12noon - recovering on the ward  
3pm - first physiotherapy appointment

Mr Coe said that by 8am on the morning after his operation, he was on

crutches, climbing up and down the hospital stairs as part of his next physiotherapy appointment, and he was discharged from the hospital, on crutches at 10am.

Derek said: "It was amazing, I was literally back at home by 11am the next morning, and was only on crutches for the next 10 days.

"I was given a lot of extensive physiotherapy support by the hospital, which really helped to boost my confidence during the recovery.

"You think after surgery you can't do things and that you need to take it carefully and easily, but they really showed me I could do more than I thought.

"I only needed mild painkillers for the initial three weeks following the

operation and then I didn't need them any more.

"Once I came off the crutches, I was back driving my car again just three weeks later, my recovery really was phenomenal.

"I know some people who have had the more traditional hip replacement and it did take them a lot longer to get over it.

"The time this saves the hospital in terms of nursing and recovery, must be a massive boost for hospitals - I'm surprised it's not promoted more often. I would certainly recommend this."

Mr Coe said: "It has now been just 12 weeks since the operation and my life is back to normal. I'm digging my garden and, while running is now behind me, I am planning to go hill-walking in the summer."



► Mr Marcellino Maheson