

*After undergoing the latest technology in hip replacement surgery, Ron Blase is back to enjoying magical moments with his 4-year-old grandson Brian. Photography by Brad Smith*



# On the MOVE AGAIN



Thanks to advances in orthopaedics, Bethesda North Hospital is giving those with joint pain new lives

By Cindy McCoy

On a warm, sunny day in August, Ron Blase spent nearly 12 hours enthusiastically strolling the grounds of Cedar Point amusement park, keeping pace with his five young grandchildren and their parents. He hiked up hills and navigated turns. He smiled with every step. Seemingly ordinary things for most of us. But what makes this family outing so remarkable is that just a short five weeks earlier, Blase had undergone total hip replacement surgery at Bethesda North Hospital.

"I never would have been able to do that before my surgery. Most of my time was spent looking for a way to get comfortable, to find at least a few minutes relief from the constant pain." That intense pain eventually forced the 66-year-old to give up the sport he so enjoyed. "I golfed up until about two weeks prior to surgery but finally had to stop." Blase credits his recent hip replacement procedure with eliminating

the pain and returning him to the life he once knew.

## A Generation Thing

Blase underwent a third generation or G3 hip replacement surgery, an advanced procedure that uses only a single, small incision. Evolved from G2 or two-incision approaches, the G3 innovation represents the culmination of efforts in recent years to transform hip replacement surgery and improve rehabilitation. This minimally invasive technique benefits the patient in many ways:

- Less post-operative pain
- Reduced injury to underlying muscle tissue
- Shorter hospital stay
- More rapid recovery
- Quicker return to normal activity

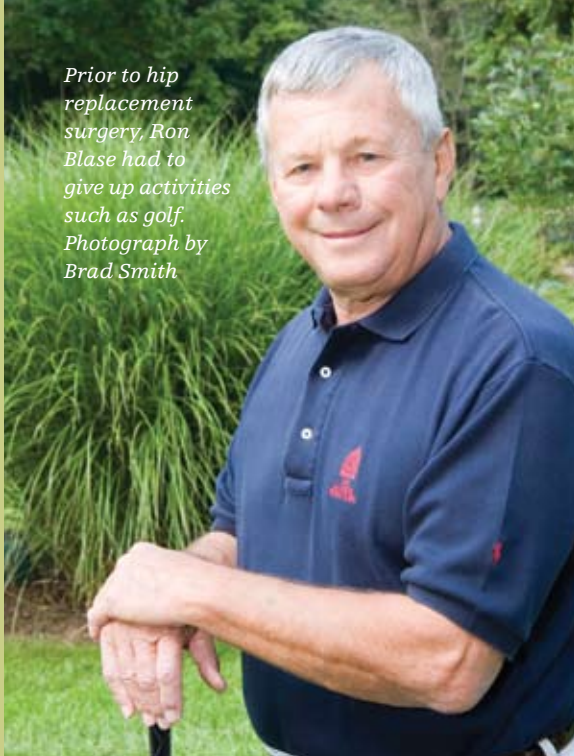
It was the availability of the G3 procedure and the recommendations of two acquaintances who underwent similar surgeries that attracted the Centerville

resident to Bethesda North. He's not alone. Bethesda North Hospital's growing reputation for employing leading-edge technology and first-rate patient care also has drawn orthopaedic patients from northern Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Tennessee and even as far as North Carolina.

Director of TriHealth's Musculoskeletal & Rehabilitation Services Bob Pritts explains, "A significant factor for patients in identifying a quality orthopaedic program is volume. Patients have increased confidence and comfort with surgeons and programs that have routine experience with the procedure."

Bethesda North Hospital's Orthopaedic Division experienced a 19 percent growth in the past year, having performed more than 1,000 total hip and knee replacement surgeries. As Blase extols, "It's a no-brainer. The care I received made the drive worthwhile."

Prior to hip replacement surgery, Ron Blase had to give up activities such as golf. Photograph by Brad Smith



### Team Support

In addition to an investment in the latest technology, the Orthopaedic Division has an equal commitment to examining all aspects of a patient's journey from pre-registration through discharge. "It's all about superior patient care; it's what drives everything we do," Pritts emphasizes. "We want service excellence to permeate every aspect of orthopaedic care at Bethesda North Hospital."

That's why an interdisciplinary team of 50-plus members meets weekly. Professionals from all areas ranging from surgeons and perioperative nurses to pre-admission educators and occupational therapists engage in discussion and also plan ways to continuously improve the patient's experience.

### Safety Check

Teamwork was one of several things that impressed Blase. An emphasis on patient safety was another. "One of my greatest concerns was the possibility of developing an infection," he says. "Turns out I didn't need to worry. They took the necessary precautions to reduce that risk."

Besides ensuring a sterile surgical environment, those precautionary measures include advanced screening for harmful bacteria. It's a step initiated by the orthopaedic team, which includes an infectious disease specialist.

"Many people unknowingly carry bacteria, which easily can be picked up

at such public places as health clubs or pools," explains Sherri Ahaus, director of Perioperative Services for Bethesda North Hospital. "Identifying and treating potential infectious agents with antibiotics prior to surgery significantly decreases the likelihood of complications."

### Rapid Recovery

State-of-the-art anesthesia techniques further reduce possible complications by helping to better manage pain and control nausea. "The less nausea and pain patients experience following joint replacement surgery, the more quickly they're able to begin therapy. The more quickly patients begin therapy, the sooner they return to their normal activities," Ahaus says.

For Blase, physical therapy began the day after surgery. "And I only had to walk down the hall to get there," he adds. That's because Bethesda North understands the value of having physical therapy nearby. In fact, an even larger physical therapy area will be part of the dedicated orthopaedic


## Orthopaedic Questions

To contact a Bethesda North Hospital orthopaedic surgeon, call the TriHealth Physician Referral Line at **(513) 569-6732**.

floor when the hospital's new tower opens next year (see page 6).

"Travel time to therapy impacts a patient's recovery considerably," explains senior physical therapist Pam Rice, P.T. "If patients have to go a long way, they may become fatigued or ill and cancel their therapy."

Blase's progress following surgery has been exemplary. After a two-day hospital stay, he returned home and continued his therapy as an outpatient. After a few practice swings on the driving range, he's once again ready to hit the links.

"I asked my doctor what people did in the 'old days' before all this great technology," he shares. "I couldn't imagine having to live with that pain the rest of my life." Thanks to his surgeon and the skilled orthopaedic team of Bethesda North Hospital, he won't have to. 

## In a League of Their Own

From the college athlete playing his heart out to the 8-year-old dreaming of making it to the "Big Leagues," TriHealth Sports Medicine specializes in sports-related care and training for people of all ages, even spectators in the stands. As the official health care system for the Cincinnati Reds, TriHealth Sports Medicine sponsors and staffs first aid stations throughout the Great American Ball Park and handles transport of injured or sick fans to the hospital if necessary.

Part of TriHealth's comprehensive Orthopaedic Division, the Sports Medicine Program partners with more than 30 area professional teams, colleges, universities, high schools and other sports-related organizations. Services range from pre-participation physicals for high school athletes to CPR training for coaching staff. "Our goal is to help the athletes and the sports programs in which they participate to be as healthy, safe and successful as possible," says Greg Lynn, manager for the TriHealth Sports Medicine Program. "We don't just manage and treat sports injuries; we try to prevent the injury before it happens."

TriHealth's expertise in sports medicine also is helping to bring several large-scale events to our area, including the Cincinnati Winter Sports Festival this December. TriHealth will provide medical coverage for the weekend-long event anticipated to draw more than 8,000 amateur athletes participating in 15 Olympic-style events.

"Having a strong medical partner like TriHealth supports our efforts to attract major sporting events to Cincinnati," says Leslie Spencer, director of the Greater Cincinnati Sports Corp., an entity funded by the Greater Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky and Northern Cincinnati convention and visitors bureaus.

# On BENDED KNEES

A serious automobile accident 30 years ago left 52-year-old West Chester, Ohio, resident David Mines with debilitating knee pain. Arthritis produced similar excruciating pain in the knee of 64-year-old Trenton, Ohio, resident Judith Cash. Both had begun to accept chronic knee pain as part of life until their physician recommended a total joint replacement procedure using breakthrough computer-guided technology.

## Highly Precise Alignment

Commonly compared to a driver's use of a Global Positioning System (GPS), electromagnetic (EM) computer-assisted navigation employs small, minimally invasive tracking devices and an advanced software program to help surgeons determine the exact position of an implant in relation to

*West Chester, Ohio, resident David Mines no longer buckles to knee pain.*



their surgical instruments and patients' bones. Just as a GPS helps drivers navigate to their destination, so too does computer-guided technology lead surgeons to the precise location for optimal placement of the artificial joint. The result is greater accuracy in joint alignment and improved patient outcomes.

"It's a tool that gives the surgeon a little extra edge in achieving near-perfect alignment," explains Lauren Schneider, R.N., orthopaedic and trauma specialty coordinator. "A more accurate alignment can significantly extend the life of an artificial knee."

Unlike prior camera-based navigation systems, the new EM system attaches tracking devices to the outside of the bone rather than inserting pins into the bone. The result is reduced injury to underlying muscle tissue.

## Pre-surgery Education

To better prepare patients for what to expect before, during and after surgery, Bethesda North Hospital's orthopaedic team has introduced a comprehensive class for total joint replacement patients in conjunction with their pre-admission testing. "At first I felt pretty scared about the surgery, but the class really gives you a sense that you can do this," Cash says.

The class alleviated Mines' fears as well. "They go over everything with you," he adds. "It really helped." In addition, total joint replacement patients receive a comprehensive, educational notebook that covers everything from appropriate nutrition to recommended preoperative exercises.


## Inspiring Outcomes

Cash and Mines agree that they could not have expected better results. "Before the surgery,

## Breakthrough technology for total knee replacement opens up new world

I no longer could do anything," Cash says. "I couldn't go to my church. I missed birthday parties. I practically was homebound."

That's all changed now. Today Cash enjoys shopping with her granddaughters and attending church services regularly. "Words can't describe the difference," she says. "I know it sounds overly dramatic, but this surgery has given me a whole new lease on life."

Mines echoes her sentiments. "For the first time in 30 years, I'm not in agonizing pain. It's just fantastic." The surgery has allowed Mines to be more active with his 12-year-old son and to help again with routine tasks like mowing the lawn. "It's been a great experience. My surgeon and the hospital staff have taken terrific care of me," he says. "As long as I have a choice, I will always choose Bethesda North Hospital." 

## Learn More

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*Simple everyday activities are no longer a struggle for Trenton, Ohio, resident Judith Cash.*

