

## Dr. Paul Slavchenko once again enjoys being active thanks to a commonplace surgical procedure that eliminated his pain and increased his mobility.

Arthritis in his hips was robbing Dr. Paul Slavchenko of the things he enjoyed most. The 800 meter walk from his home to the library, with his three year old daughter by his side, had become a painful, tortuous journey. His work, as an anesthesiologist at the local hospital, was becoming increasingly painful to sustain, especially on the long shifts.

felt himself “slowing down” over the past few years and was limping after squash, the pain in his hips causing more and more difficulty. Work became painful too.

An on-call Anesthesiologist at Lake-ridge Health in Oshawa, Ontario, Paul regularly worked 24 hour shifts, standing on his feet, hurrying from patient to patient.

“I would leave the hospital feeling and looking like a very old man,” Paul says.

Initially, he used non-prescription anti-inflammatory medication to “work through” the pain. As things worsened, his physician prescribed stronger anti-inflammatories. Eventually, even the maximum dosage was unable to stem the pain. Because of his job, he refused to take narcotic pain medication that might impact his judgment.

“What I realize now is that I was an unhappy and grumpy guy,” says Paul. “But, I was trying to just deal with it.”

By 2007, the pain and lack of mobility were worsening and Paul decided to undergo hip surgery. Hip Arthroplasty is a process by which hip joints are resurfaced, repaired or replaced entirely, depending on the needs of each patient. In Paul’s case, his orthopedic surgeon recommended a hip resurfacing procedure.

There are a number of conditions that may cause the cartilage inside the hip to degenerate, causing pain and impairing mobility. Of these, the most common are rheumatoid and osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis is the more common form of arthritis and is caused by “wear” and “tear” on the joint.<sup>1</sup> Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease that affects the lining of the joints and can result in destruction of the articular cartilage and tissues around the joints.<sup>1</sup>

While total joint replacement procedures have proven to be very effective for late middle-aged and elderly patients,<sup>1</sup> other Hip Arthroplasty procedures, including hip resurfacing, are adding important new treatment options for younger patients.

Paul’s surgery was performed at Montreal’s Sir Mortimer B. Davis Jewish Memorial Hospital in February 2007, using a spinal anesthetic which numbed his lower body. The procedure itself took about 90 minutes and he was sitting up the next day. Admitted on a Friday, he was discharged from hospital on Tuesday to stay with friends and by Saturday, with the use of crutches, he was comfortable taking a five hour train ride home on his own.

“Two weeks after my surgery, I was almost euphoric,” says Paul. “My hip hurt less at that early stage of recovery than it had before the operation.”

Six weeks after surgery, Paul walked



back onto the train without even a cane, for the trip to Montreal and a follow-up appointment with his surgeon. He no longer needed any medication for pain, and was back to work in the operating room. He was also back to riding his bike 90 minutes a day.

“Now, I have no problem carrying my daughter on my shoulders going back and forth to the library,” beams Paul. “One of my biggest pleasures has been teaching my now four year old to ski this winter with my wife.”

### fast facts

- About 100,000 Canadians are diagnosed with Arthritis each year and it is estimated that by 2026, more than 6 million Canadians will be diagnosed with this disease.<sup>2</sup>
- The cost of Arthritis in Canada is estimated at \$4.4 billion per year.<sup>2</sup>
- 76% of Arthritis costs are due to lost productivity and long-term disability.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2007, there were 43,000 Hip Arthroplasty procedures done in Canada.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Medical Advisory Secretariat. “Health Technology Policy Assessment: Metal on Metal Total Hip Resurfacing Arthroplasty,” Report. p.12 (February 2006)

<sup>2</sup> The Arthritis Society of Canada. <http://www.arthritis.ca/resources%20for%20advocates/arthroscope/facts/default.asp?s=1> (2008)

<sup>3</sup> The Arthritis Society of Canada. <http://www.arthritis.ca/resources%20for%20advocates/arthroscope/facts/slide13/default.asp?s=1> (2008)

<sup>4</sup> Chrysler Data 2007 Summary Report (2008)

### technology overview

Hip Arthroplasty, commonly known as “hip replacement” includes a range of treatment options ranging from hip resurfacing to total joint replacement. Total hip replacement involves replacing both the “ball” and “socket” surfaces in the hip with prosthetic devices made of metals and other materials including plastics and ceramics. In hip resurfacing procedures, more of the bone is conserved as the working faces of the “ball” and “socket” joint are reshaped, rather than totally replaced.

The variety of Hip Arthroplasty technologies now available provide a broad range of options for patients of different ages and underlying conditions, enabling physicians to restore more patients to independent mobility.

“At first, it was just pain in my right hip,” says Paul. “Then, I began to have a lot less mobility and a reduced range of motion.”

Always an active man, Paul had regularly cycled for 90 minutes each day, played squash and skied cross-country each winter. He had

