

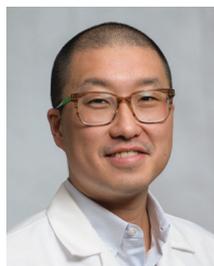


Ruth Tyroler is back on her feet with her dog, Luna, after having a bad fall down stairs at her home.

# FIXING A HIP FRACTURE

**HAVING HIP REPLACEMENT SURGERY AFTER A DOG-RELATED FALL LEAVES A WOMAN'S JOINT BETTER THAN EVER.**

**R**uth Tyroler of Hoboken was upstairs at home with her feisty American pit bull terrier, Luna, when family guests arrived at her door. Hastening to put her excited dog in a lower-level bedroom, Ruth gathered Luna's leash and began dashing downstairs—but



**RICHARD YOON, MD**

became entangled in the leash.

"I lost my balance and fell the height of four stairs," Ruth says. "I smashed my left hip into the slate floor and broke my femoral neck [a bone in the hip joint]."

Ruth used the banister to stand but couldn't bear any weight, and movement caused more pain. "My husband called an ambulance," she says. "I was in the worst pain of my life."

Scans at a local emergency department confirmed the fracture. Ruth was told she would likely need a hip

## KEY FACTS ABOUT BROKEN HIP

Hip fractures can occur at any age, but nearly 80 percent of people who are hospitalized for them are 65 or older, according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

“Postmenopausal, Caucasian women are most susceptible to fragility fractures, osteopenia [low bone mass] and osteoporosis [more serious bone loss],” says orthopedic surgeon Richard Yoon, MD, with RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group. “If you fit this profile, see your primary doctor and get a bone density test.”

Other factors that increase risks for fractures include smoking, having chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or asthma, and using corticosteroids. Factors that can increase the risks of falling include physical and mental impairments, arthritis, balance issues, poor vision, dementia and use of medications that affect balance or strength, or cause dizziness or drowsiness.

Dr. Yoon recommends that postmenopausal women take vitamin D and calcium supplements. To minimize the risk of falls at home, keep areas well-lit and free of loose cords and rugs.

replacement.

Her family encouraged her to see a surgeon in New York City. But Ruth was happy with cortisone injections she had received for hip bursitis at Jersey City Medical Center (JCMC). The hospital was recently rated 5-star for hip fracture treatment by Healthgrades, a leading online resource for finding high-quality doctors and hospitals.

Confident that she would receive top-notch care closer to home, Ruth asked to be transferred to JCMC.

### AN IDEAL CANDIDATE

At JCMC, Richard Yoon, MD, an orthopedic surgeon with RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group and Professor, Director of Orthopedic Research and Fellowship Director in the Division of Orthopedic Trauma and Adult Reconstruction, was on call when Ruth arrived.

“The type of accident Ruth had is, unfortunately, very common,” says Dr. Yoon. “Fortunately, she was relatively young, active, healthy, slim and a non-smoker, and she didn’t use any assistive devices. These factors, as well as the location of her fracture—just below the ball of the ball-and-socket hip joint—made her an ideal candidate for a total hip arthroplasty [replacement].”

On July 12, 2024, Dr. Yoon performed



### THE HOSPITAL WAS RECENTLY RATED 5-STAR FOR HIP FRACTURE TREATMENT BY HEALTHGRADES.

Ruth’s total hip replacement using a direct anterior approach. This type of surgery entailed accessing Ruth’s hip from an incision at the front of her body instead of from the side, as is done in a more traditional posterior approach.

“The anterior approach is muscle-sparing and allows for a faster recovery,” Dr. Yoon says. “Patients leave the hospital sooner, tend to go home rather than to a rehabilitation center and are usually walking without a cane by two weeks.”

The replacement prosthetic uses materials such as high-grade titanium that the bone grows into. The hip joint is made of high-grade plastic with a ceramic head, materials that together give the hardware long-lasting, low-wear properties.

During his hour-long anterior hip replacement procedures, Dr. Yoon uses an X-ray technology called intraoperative fluoroscopy and a specialized operating table. Techniques such as using intrawound antibiotics, a special wash before closing and a

## AVOIDING DOG-WALKING DANGERS

Dog owners applaud the benefits of having canine friends, including getting physical activity when playing and walking. But fun with Fido can pose injury risks.

A 2023 analysis of a national health database found that emergency department visits caused by being tripped or pulled by a dog leash surged by a factor of four between 2001 and 2020. Injuries included broken fingers, shoulder sprains and traumatic brain injuries.

To minimize dog-walking mishaps, researchers suggest using short or retractable leashes and paying close attention to both your pet and surroundings. That includes not gazing at your phone and being aware of doggie distractions such as activity (squirrel!) that might cause your bestie to bolt.

dressings with an airtight closure help minimize the risk of infection.

### MAKING A QUICK RECOVERY

Ruth was walking the day after her surgery and was discharged the following day.

“At the hospital, the entire staff was wonderful,” she says. She underwent physical therapy at home for two weeks. Aside from avoiding specific movements that would stress the joint as it healed during the first six weeks, she had no restrictions on her activity.

Ruth is now back to work, walks daily and exercises regularly. She sees Dr. Yoon for periodic follow-ups and will see him annually after one year. Dr. Yoon expects the new hip joint to last 20 to 25 years.

“Dr. Yoon is a great surgeon,” says Ruth. “Getting a new hip was an amazing change in my life. I’m going to be better than I was before.”

To learn more about joint replacement surgery at RWJBarnabas Health, visit [rwjbh.org/ortho](http://rwjbh.org/ortho).

