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**X-Stop providing relief**



LETTY SMITH AND DR. JAMES BRENNAN

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Arletrice "Letty" Smith of Hartsville has more pep in her step thanks to a new surgical procedure for lumbar spinal stenosis called X-Stop.

Dr. James Brennan with Florence Neurosurgery & Spine performed this pain-relieving procedure by inserting a small titanium implant, called an X-Stop, in the lower part of her spine.



X-STOP TITANIUM IMPLANT

Mrs. Smith had been experiencing recurring hip and leg pain for about four years. Her physician treated her with conservative measures, but when the pain worsened referred her to a specialist. In December last year she saw Dr. Brennan, a local neurosurgeon.

Dr. Brennan told her she was a candidate for the X-Stop procedure, but recommended she try corticosteroid injections first. She was given an injection by epidural and experienced relief from the pain for about three months. A second epidural was done, but this time the pain came back worse.

She elected for the minimum invasive X-Stop procedure and on July 9, Dr. Brennan performed the surgery to insert the device between the spinous processes in her lower spine.

"It was instant relief," recalls Mrs. Smith.

The only discomfort she felt was from the small surgical incision in her back. The hip and leg pain was gone.

Mrs. Smith spent the night in the hospital for observation, and went home the next day.

"I would highly recommend this procedure to anyone who is a candidate," said Mrs. Smith, a retired registered nurse. "It removes nothing and the incision is very small."

Spinal stenosis is a narrowing of the spinal canal. Some patients are born with this narrowing, but most often spinal stenosis is the result of a degenerative condition that develops in people over the age of 50. Degenerative or age-related changes in our bodies can lead to compression of nerves that may cause pain or damage.

The beauty of the X-Stop Interspinous Process Decompression (IDP) is that there is no removal of bone or soft tissue. The implant is not positioned close to nerves or the spinal cord, but rather behind the spinal cord between the bony spinous processes.

The procedure may be performed in either the operating room or special procedures room at the hospital. Using local anesthesia and with the help of X-ray guidance, the X-Stop implant is inserted through a small incision in the skin of the

patient's back. Alternatively, the surgeon may elect to use general anesthesia.

Dr. Brennan was trained to do the X-Stop procedure in Baltimore nearly four years ago. Since then, he has inserted more than 80 implants on elderly patients, including an 80 year old.

The X-Stop is the last step before surgery, he said.

"I think this fills a void," Brennon said, explaining that patients who aren't up to major surgery are finding relief through this minor surgery.

This is a fully reversible procedure that does not limit any future non-surgical and surgical treatment options.

"It doesn't make the patient's condition worse," he noted.

Dr. Brennan, who now trains other surgeons in this procedure, said individuals interested in seeing if they are a candidate for the X-Stop procedure should ask their primary physician about a referral.

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