

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

High-tech Prosthetic Leg Helps Coralville Man Walk Again

A diagnosis of cancer the summer of 2009 brought fast and unwelcome changes to 74-year old Don Pelechek's life. The retiree and his wife, Ellen, were enjoying their home on Brown Deer Golf Course in Coralville and days spent on the links when they learned it would be necessary for Don's leg to be amputated at the hip. Not wanting to give him false hope, doctors were hesitant to offer Don any reassurances about his level of mobility following surgery.

"It was tough news to hear," says Don. "I've always been active and suddenly had no idea if I'd ever be able to even walk again."

Unwilling to accept life in a wheelchair without at least researching other options, Don took it upon himself to find someone who could talk with him about the possibility of a prosthetic limb. His random selection out of the phone book was a lucky one, leading him to one of only three practitioners in the state of Iowa certified to fit patients with promising new prosthetic technology.

"I was right away able to let Don know that a prosthetic that was recently developed specifically for patients whose limb loss surgery affected a hip joint was showing great success," says Kristian Kittelson, Certified Prosthetist for Hanger Prosthetics & Orthotics located in Iowa City. "Though a high level amputation such as Don's presents very unique challenges, I had confidence we had the solution and would get him walking again."

Don was fit with the Helix^{3D} Hip Joint System from Otto Bock HealthCare in January of this year. The first innovation in hip joints in a quarter of a century, the Helix^{3D} name derives from the totally unique three-dimensional movement available from the product. This feature gives the prosthetic leg more natural movement, and the benefits range from the subtle, such

as making it easier to get into a car or reach down to tie a shoe, to the profound, such as being able to walk without crutches for the first time.

Otto Bock's C-Leg® is also part of Don's prosthesis. The world's first completely computer-controlled artificial leg, the C-Leg utilizes microprocessors to control the knee's hydraulic function 50 times a second, giving incredible stability and mobility to those with lower limb loss. It allows users to walk down stairs step-over-step for the first time since losing their limb and to walk down ramps or slopes and over rough terrain without the fear of falling down, a common occurrence for lower limb amputees using conventional prosthetic legs. Programmed via a laptop computer to match the unique gait of Don's sound leg, the C-Leg can also be set for different modes (stances for biking, golfing, inline skating, etc.) which are accessed using a remote control.

Today, Don is able to walk without even a cane at times and is working diligently on his golf swing. He can often be seen out in the community with friends having coffee or walking the local mall.

"I really enjoy getting out and about again," Don says. "There's a lot of curiosity about my futuristic looking high-tech leg. I welcome the questions, especially if it means someone else will be helped because of my experience."

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Minnesota-based Otto Bock HealthCare LP was established in 1958 as the Americas corporate headquarters of Otto Bock HealthCare, GmbH, based in Duderstadt, Germany. Otto Bock has more than 4,000 employees worldwide and produces over 40,000 types of prosthetic and orthotic components, mobility and rehabilitation products, and is the U.S. leader in delivering continuous passive motion (CPM) services and related therapies. (www.ottobockus.com)