

New treatment got Marlene back in the swing

by Bill Gibb

AFTER more than 30 years of playing golf, Marlene Evans was keen to continue with the game she loved and felt was keeping her active.

But she feared she'd have to swap her golf clubs for a walking stick after she started suffering from excruciating pain in her hips.

Surgery to replace them was looking like the only option — until a few short sessions with a “magic” wand.

She had her problems solved by the use of a hand-held wand delivering shockwaves into her hips.

It's a treatment developed two decades ago for dealing with kidney stones that's only just been found to work as effectively on patients with common hip problems.

“I love my golf and play off a handicap of 24, although it's been as low as 16,” says Marlene, who's retired and lives in Wrexham.

Painkillers

“Apart from the sport and the company, I've always thought getting out in the fresh air was good for me.

“But I started to notice my hips hurting more and more, and was needing to take painkillers before and after a round.

“What was even worse was that the pain started keeping me awake at night.

“Whatever side I was lying on, it would hurt so much I'd have to roll over.

“It got so bad that, eventually, I was taking as many as eight strong prescription painkillers a day, which were making me sick and dizzy.

“At one stage, it was thought I might have DVT.

“Tests at A&E ruled that out, but X-rays showed that my hips were suffering badly from wear and tear.

“I know a lot of golfers who've had to have hip replacements and I really was dreading the same.”

Salvation for Marlene came with referral to orthopaedic surgeon Tony Smith at Spire Yale Hospital, in Wrexham.

He was able to tell her that she had trochanteric bursitis, a common disorder of the hip.

It results from a swelling of the bursa, a fluid sac helping prevent friction between bones.

Marlene's golf swing was

putting additional pressure and aggravating the problem.

The new solution she was offered was extra-corporeal shockwave therapy, which is just starting to be recognised as an orthopaedic treatment after 20 years' use for kidney stones.

It uses high energy soundwaves focused on the affected area with a vibrating wand attached to a generator.

The waves come in short bursts.

“I was told that my circumstances made me suitable, and it was done over three short sessions one week apart,” adds Marlene.

“It was only a few minutes each time and there was no pain, just a buzzing sort of feeling.

“I even said to Mr Smith that he could turn it up a bit.

Wonderful

“He said that I might not notice a difference right away but, just a few days after the third and final treatment, I really did feel so much better.

“It's been a few months since I had the treatment and it's been wonderful.

“I'm sleeping fine, enjoying golf two or three times a week when the weather's good and with no need for painkillers.

“I'd certainly recommend the treatment.”

According to Mr Smith, many more patients could benefit from the wand.



“There are patients on tablets for a lengthy period for whom surgery can be unpredictable,” says Mr Smith.

“Although this treatment isn't for everyone, it's another option to which they might respond.

“And it's not just for hips. It's something that can be used for all sorts of areas of the body from the heel and knee to the shoulder.

“It's so simple to do. It really is very like an ultrasound a pregnant woman might have, except that it's very high intensity sound waves that are emitted.”

