

Shanyce Wright, 24  
Centennial, Colorado  
Surgery at Colorado Joint Replacement, under the care of Charlie Yang, MD  
December 1, 2022, right hip replacement

Shanyce Wright, 24, of Centennial, Colorado has always had a strong spiritual base and sunny disposition. "I believe whatever is meant to be is going to be and I just need to be patient. My family has that strong base too and it just keeps me balanced."

That disposition has certainly helped as Shanyce has had to navigate several health conditions starting in 2014 when she was diagnosed with systemic lupus immediately after graduating from high school in Jamaica. She was put on high doses of prednisone for a few months which led to her losing bone - a side effect of the drug. She managed her condition for a few years while also enduring pain in the hip, knees, wrists and ankles. She couldn't step on her right leg or lay on her right side.

In 2015 she was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. The next year she started nursing school in the West Indies and eventually had difficulty getting up from a seated position and walking at all.

It became so painful and severe that she went for x-rays and was diagnosed with avascular necrosis of the right femoral hip. She had been recommended by her rheumatologist to an orthopaedic surgeon who said she was too young for joint replacement so they did a bone graft in 2016.

"I wouldn't say it was highly effective. I was in nursing school and on crutches traveling an hour to school in the mornings. But after six to seven months I was off the crutches and walking better without the same pain."

But by 2017 she noticed that her right leg was getting shorter and had pains again. She was told by her doctor that her legs were the same length but she got a second opinion. "I know my body and knew something was wrong." The second opinion confirmed that indeed her leg was getting shorter because her right hip was fixed and not moving. "That made everything harder for me."

She went through nursing school and did an internship with a public hospital in Jamaica. She was on her feet eight hours a day sometimes without a break for lunch. Her uncle would pick her up after each day due to her pain and she spent her evenings in the shower or bath, rotating her hip. She graduated school and continued to endure major discomfort.

In 2020 she moved to the United States to live with her mother. She arrived during the pandemic though she didn't apply for a nursing job as she just couldn't do it given her physical challenges. Despite all of this she kept her steady disposition and applied for jobs she could do from home.

While browsing on FACEBOOK she came across the story of another woman who received care from Operation Walk USA, a program that provides free joint replacements during the first week of December each year for patients who can't afford them. She decided to apply and qualified in August. "I didn't believe it and I had to call to reconfirm. Did I really get through and what do I do now. It was when I went to the hospital and got my first checkup that I realized it was all true. I just couldn't even talk about it as it was so overwhelming."

On December 1, she will have her right hip replaced by orthopaedic surgeon Charlie Yang, MD, at Colorado Joint Replacement. She recently moved in with her sister and brother in Centennial to be closer to the hospital and ensure her good care.

She credits her family and friends in helping her through this time and especially keeping her mental health strong. "Right now I feel great, though still in pain and with a walker and am looking forward to my surgery date," she says.

What lies ahead? I want to submit the right documents, apply for my entrance exam and return to nursing. I became interested in the profession after learning so much about my own health from a nurse at one of the early hospitals where I got care. She's retired now and doesn't know but one day I hope to find her."

Shanyce will soon be starting a new chapter in life after a very difficult one at a young age.

When asked what she wants to do right after surgery, she says she'd like to try zip lining or skiing – both activities she's wanted to pursue since high school.

She'll bring her sunny disposition and spirituality with her. It's been years of pain," she says and all this is coming to an end. It can't get any worse and can only go up from here."