

Dawn Smith loves spending time with her grandchildren, Noah and Colton. The Tinton Falls resident is a graphic artist and volunteers at her local church.



## Meet Our Experts in Joint Health



The decision to explore bone and joint health and your options for treatment starts with you or a loved one. We are committed to helping you understand all of your options, and our goal is to help you get back to your routine and on the move. Learn more by visiting [MeridianHealthMovement.com](http://MeridianHealthMovement.com).

## Peace of Mind

**Bayshore Community Hospital** Dawn Smith knew she was in good hands when she had her back surgery at Bayshore.

DAWN SMITH OF TINTON FALLS HADN'T BEEN IN A HOSPITAL SINCE HER SON was born 31 years ago. She has led an active lifestyle — walking, biking, keeping up with her three grandchildren, serving at her church, and volunteering in the community. So when pain in her lower back became unbearable, with no relief from stretching or from the chiropractor, she knew she needed answers.



**Nasser Ani, M.D.**  
Board certified in  
Orthopedic Surgery  
Hazlet  
732-264-8282

"I've had problems with my lower back for years. I traveled a lot for my job with many trips back and forth to the D.C. area, so I attributed the irritation to long car rides," Dawn says. "I went for an MRI and saw a few different back and pain specialists who all told me that I needed surgery."

### Expertise Brings Peace of Mind

Dawn quickly met with Nasser Ani, M.D., a board certified orthopedic and spine surgeon with 24 years of experience on staff at Bayshore Community Hospital, who diagnosed her with a ruptured disc. "A ruptured disc occurs when the spinal disc

breaks down and the inner core of the disc leaks out through the outer portion," Dr. Ani says. "Pieces of Dawn's disc had broken off and invaded the spine, causing extreme pressure on the nerves."

"When he looked at my MRI films, he too recommended surgery. I knew I couldn't ignore the pain any longer, so if surgery was the recommended treatment, that's what I was going to do," Dawn says.

On April 30, 2013, Dawn arrived at Bayshore for a microdiscectomy. According to Dr. Ani, microdiscectomy is a type of lumbar herniated disc surgery designed to take pressure off the nerve in which a small portion of the disc is removed. In Dawn's case, four pieces of the disc were removed. The procedure is minimally invasive.

Though Dawn was initially nervous about the surgery, the staff at Bayshore put her at ease. "From the moment I arrived to the moment I left, the staff at Bayshore was professional and made me feel comfortable, like I was part of their own family," Dawn says. "Everyone made me feel safe and confident. I knew I was in good hands."

### On the Move Again

After the surgery, Dawn began physical therapy to help her return to normal movement, and she was able to enjoy her summer.

"I am still recovering, but I am able to move much more comfortably now," Dawn says. "When I decided to have my surgery, a lot of people told me not to do it, but I am glad I did. And I'm glad I did it at Bayshore. The staff was great, and Dr. Ani paid more attention to me as a patient than I have seen in other places. It meant a lot to me to be treated so well."

by Caitlin Coyle