

Orthopaedic Connection

True Arthritis of the Hip Joint

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Trochanteric bursitis is much more common than true arthritis of the hip and a lot easier to treat I might add. As I have pointed out, my patients often call trochanteric bursitis, "arthritis". They are extremely pleased when I get plain x-rays and tell them they don't have arthritis.

Cause

There are certainly a variety of things that can cause arthritis of the hip joint.

Heredity

Trauma, i.e. after fracture or dislocation

Developmental conditions

Inflammatory conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis

Overweight might be a factor, but I have not been impressed with this aspect nearly as much as for knees.

Symptoms

Twinges of pain or stiffness especially in the morning in your groin, buttock or even the thigh.

Pain can flare up when you are overly active and decrease or disappear when you rest.

Symptoms tend to be progressive over a period of time, but actually can disappear for awhile making you think all is well only to return in a few months.

Soon you begin to limit trips to the store or avoid places where you have to walk a distance. You look for places to sit down. Later, pain can be present at rest too, especially at night.

You find yourself taking Advil or Tylenol extra strength more often. You say it must be "pulled muscles", but you are worried it isn't.

How I diagnose it

Some things never change in that careful history, thorough exam and plain x-rays are always needed. They should be done in that order.

By the way, ***MRI is rarely needed to diagnose hip osteoarthritis.*** I am amazed at the number of patients I see who have had MRI and no plain x-ray of the hip.

I always include in my history and exam, the back and entire leg, because you can miss things just looking at the hip alone. There is an important overlap of symptoms from the back and other parts of the leg with the hip. There is no law against having two conditions.

Treatment

This is a critical area of our discussion about hip osteoarthritis and I want to give it justice. What I will do as I have done in the past is cover this important part next week. This will include nonsurgical treatment as well as surgery.

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Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives. I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush