

Arthritis of the Hip: Why me?

Hip osteoarthritis is a serious and complex disease that affects millions of people in the United States.

We have been talking about the hip a lot recently, but I'd like to get a little more basic and delve into why people actually get hip arthritis. How can you be doing O.K. and without any history of injury and hip arthritis shows up. Why? Where did it come from? Why do some people get it in only one hip? People who do research on these things have given us some good clues about the disease.

Although there is no known cure for arthritis of the hip our treatment must be customized for the individual patient to reduce pain, maintain and improve joint mobility and limit functional disability.

Risk Factors

The risk factors for hip arthritis have not been studied as thoroughly as for the knee.

Sport activities are a definite risk factor. To get even a little broader, a history of repetitive joint use seems to be a risk factor.

Heavy lifting over a period of years causes increased risk of developing arthritis.

The combination of heavy recreational physical activity with heavy occupational workload produces the highest risk for hip osteoarthritis.

Continued use of the joint in sports related activities after hip injury has occurred also increases the risk of hip osteoarthritis.

Obesity is clearly a risk factor for the knee, but in the case of the hip it is still an open question.

And finally a risk factor you can't control is the fact that many people are simply going to get hip osteoarthritis no matter what because they are programmed to get it genetically.

Altering Biomechanics

Proper use of a cane in the opposite hand reduces loading forces on the hip and decreases pain and improves function. Nice suggestion, but the problem is, most people won't do it.

Exercise is probably the single most important aspect of managing hip osteoarthritis.

Use of a stationary exercise bike can do wonders.

A physical therapist can develop an individual program to maintain or improve range of motion and strength in muscles around the hip joint.

Aquatic physical therapy for hip osteoarthritis results in 76% of patients reporting improvement in physical function and quality of life.

Modifying hip joint biomechanics through exercise and physical therapy can be a wonderful help to patients with hip osteoarthritis.

I can cure osteoarthritis by doing a hip replacement, but if you don't need that yet and want to slow it down we can do that too. Different exercise treatments can definitely relieve pain and slow disease progression.

All Orthopaedic Surgery problems including hip problems can be evaluated by Dr. Haverbush at the Lakeview Community Wellness Center in Lakeview or at the office in Alma at 315 Warwick Dr., Alma, Michigan.

Please call 989-463-6092 for information or to schedule an appointment.

Future Lakeview Community Wellness Center Clinic dates are November 21, 2008 and December 5, 2008.

Please don't forget there is a wealth of accurate information about hip problems and all the other Orthopaedic conditions I treat on the office teaching website www.orthopodsurgeon.com. Please log on and check it out.

We are happy to answer questions from readers. You can e-mail me at orthopodsurgeon@hotmail.com or write to me at 315 Warwick Dr., Alma, Michigan 48801.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free functional lives.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush