

Lakeview Community Wellness Center Orthopaedic Connection

Hip Pain. Arthritis? Maybe Not.

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

I have noticed my patients tend to call everything from the buttocks, all the way to the groin area – arthritis.

Arthritis to me as an Orthopaedic Surgeon is a very specific condition. Did you ever stop to think that arthritis may be getting a bum rap because patients usually attribute almost everything that hurts to arthritis?

Not a day passes that I don't hear a patient say, "I'm just full of arthritis."

Well, they may hurt all over, but it is not all due to arthritis.

The Source

Everything I do in Orthopaedic Surgery in trying to help my patients is based on correctly diagnosing the source of the problem.

Lots of patients are treated by their doctor for the pain they are having. This is fine, but if you are to really help the patient, the source must be identified as closely as possible.

I have a saying I often use which is "There is no law against having two (or more) problems." This makes diagnosis even more difficult and confusing.

The Big Three

I suggest it's not wise for you to be trying to figure out the source of the pain. That's where I come in. Three very different conditions cause 90% of problems around the hip. They are:

- Lumbar spine problems, i.e. arthritis, disc trouble, pinched nerve
- Trochanteric bursitis/tendinitis
- Arthritis of the hip joint.

Lumbar Spine

Symptoms from a "bad back" frequently stay in the lower back area and upper buttocks. My patients often refer to their buttock area as "the hip".

Patients with a "bad back" usually have:

- Worn out discs (narrowing of disc space)
- Spurs (arthritis changes)
- Bulging disc(s) which may pinch a nerve.

Here is the key. If the back changes are higher up in the lumbar spine, pain can be referred to the groin and upper thigh. Lower lumbar problems can refer pain to the buttock and back of the thigh.

Sciatica is its own unique problem caused by a disc bulge pinching a nerve and leading to severe pain in the buttock and passing all the way to the foot.

Hey, this whole mess is confusing even for my referring doctors so how are you going to figure it out?

Hmm. So much more to cover. So little time (space actually!). I really don't like to have to do part twos, but it is needed at times. Please try to come back for the conclusion and lots more good information.

Please remember that anyone can make an appointment to see Dr. Haverbush at his office in Alma, at 315 Warwick Dr., across from Gratiot Medical Center. Call 989-463-6092 to make an appointment.

And don't forget every article I have written for Lakeview Area News is on my Website, www.orthopodsurgeon.com. Check it out. I specialize in you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush