

Argus Orthopaedic Zone

Hip Dislocation

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

What Is It?

Most importantly it is a serious medical emergency! It only occurs with major trauma to the body as in a motor vehicle accident or a major fall.

When the ball comes out of the socket it causes tremendous tissue damage and sometimes fractures also occur to the ball and or socket.

Symptoms

The injury causes severe pain and inability to move the leg. Any attempt to do so causes excruciating pain.

If nerve damage has occurred the person will have loss of feeling in parts of the leg or foot.

In 90% of hip dislocations, the ball (head of the femur) is pushed out the back of the socket (acetabulum). Emergency medical personnel will be required to transport the injured person to a hospital. Thorough orthopaedic exam and x-rays will reveal the extent of the injury.

How I Treat It

First of all you should know that time is critical. The time the ball is out of the socket is hugely important. Circulation to the ball is interrupted and this may cause the bone to die (necrosis).

The patient is taken to the operating room as soon as possible to replace the ball back into the socket. General anesthesia is always required. Closed treatment (reduction) is usually successful.

In a rare case open surgery is needed to reposition the ball into the socket.

Further Management

What happens next depends completely on the amount of damage that occurred to the tissues and bone. That makes it difficult to be very specific at this point. A period of bed rest in traction may follow. Some patients are able to be up with crutches in a day or two bearing minimal weight on the foot. The length of time that crutches are required is usually several weeks. A program of physical therapy exercises is often needed at some point.

Long term Consequences

A hip dislocation can have serious long term consequences because it damages many tissues around the hip joint including nerves.

A very serious result of hip dislocation occurs when the blood supply to the ball was interrupted for too long a time. Then the ball gradually (over months) collapses, deforms and results in arthritis.

Hopefully none of you will ever experience this as it is a very painful, devastating injury. Be careful, please.

Office Website and Argus Orthopaedic Zone Archive

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You get the Office Website and Library, Your Orthopaedic Connection and Argus archive of every article I have written for you.

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

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush