



MUSCULOSKELETAL HEALTH NEWS

Is it time for a *New Hip?*

If your routine daily activities are significantly hampered because of hip pain that's just too stubborn to be remedied by walking aids, physical therapy, or medication, it may be time to think about hip replacement surgery. Total hip replacement is a proven procedure that's been around since the 1960s, and is now one of the most common orthopedic surgeries in the United States. Each year, well over 300,000 of us get a new hip to replace the painful joint that has been damaged by trauma or, most commonly, osteoarthritis.

Last year, OSMC's team of orthopedic surgeons helped hundreds Michiana residents return to normal everyday activity without the chronic hip pain. It's a major surgical procedure but advances in technology and technique have made it a safe and effective option for adults who might otherwise be facing a lifetime of unbearable pain.

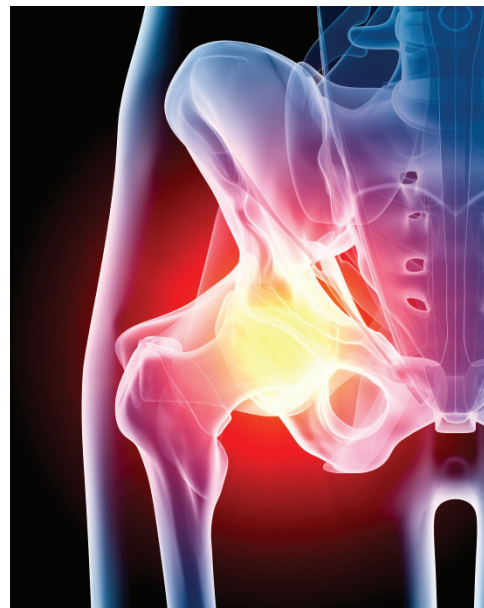
The hip is essentially a ball-and-socket joint. The ball is located at the top of the femur (thigh bone); the socket is a cup-like structure built into the pelvis. Normally, this joint allows a wide range of fluid motion allowing us to sit, stand, walk, and perform other daily activities. But when osteoarthritis strikes, the cushioning tissue that covers the bones and allows the ball to smoothly glide around the surface of the socket is damaged or worn away. The resulting bone-on-bone friction is extremely painful and that's when replacement surgery starts looking like a very appealing option.

During hip replacement procedure, the surgeon removes the diseased bone tissue and cartilage from the hip joint, leaving the healthy parts of the hip intact. After the top ball portion of the femur is removed a metal stem is securely placed into the hollow center of the femur and a metal or ceramic ball is then attached to the top of the stem. Next the diseased cartilage surface of the socket is removed and replaced with a metal socket. Finally a plastic, ceramic or metal spacer is inserted between the new ball and the socket to provide a smooth, gliding surface.

For OSMC patients, the hip replacement procedure actually begins weeks prior to surgery when the patient attends a total joint replacement class. Patients tour Elkhart General's Center for Joint Replacement, the Hospital's unit that's dedicated exclusively to joint replacement surgery and rehabilitation. They get a detailed description of each step in the process, starting with the morning of surgery and continuing through each day until discharge. They even get information on preparations that should be made at home to enable the patient to return to normal routines as quickly as possible.

Following the actual surgery, most patients are up and walking that same day and are discharged after one day of in-hospital rehabilitation. At that point, they're able to return home to continue a prescribed in-home rehab regimen. Full recovery normally takes six to twelve weeks, depending on the extent of the surgery, the overall health of the patient, and the success of the rehabilitation.

So is it time for you to consider a new hip? It could be if . . .



- Hip pain is severe enough that it limits or prevents everyday activities such as walking, bending, or climbing stairs.
- Your pain continues even while resting or sleeping.
- The joint is so stiff that it's difficult to move or lift the leg.
- You get insufficient pain relief from anti-

inflammatory drugs, physical therapy, or walking support.

For more information on the hip replacement procedure or to arrange a consultation with one of OSMC's joint replacement specialists, please call 574-264-0791.