

Plain Language Summary

The Management of Osteoarthritis of the Hip

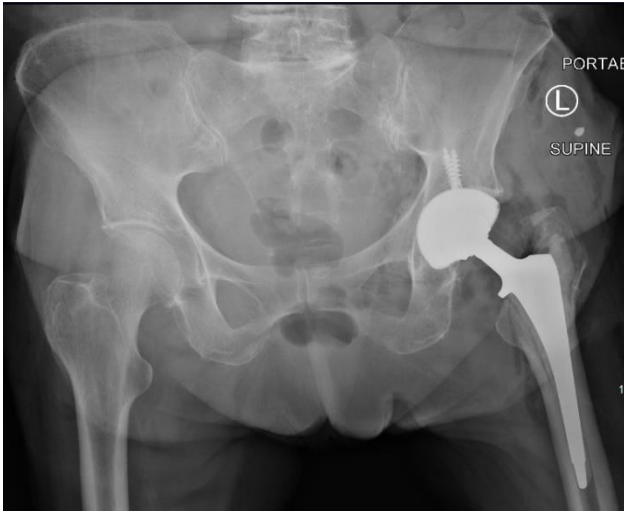


Photo courtesy of Kevin Magone, MD

Understanding Hip Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis (OA), also known as "wear-and-tear arthritis," happens when the cartilage in your joints wears down over time. The hip is a big joint in your body. It's a ball-and-socket joint, where the ball (femoral head) fits into the socket (acetabulum) of your pelvis. Cartilage covers these bones, helping them move smoothly. A thin lining called the synovium makes fluid to keep everything moving easily.²

Hip OA can happen to anyone but is more common in joints that bear weight, like the hip.² About 7 out of 100 people worldwide have hip OA. Each year, about 2 million new cases occur. As people live longer and obesity rates go up, more people are getting hip OA.¹ Women are more affected than men.¹

Hip OA can cause pain and stiffness, making it hard to do everyday activities. It can also affect your mental health, with some people feeling anxious or depressed. Older adults with hip OA often see

doctors more and have more health problems than those without OA. They also have a higher risk of dying compared to people without OA.¹

Managing Hip Osteoarthritis

If you have hip OA, treatments aim to reduce pain, help you move better, and improve your quality of life. However, all treatments, especially surgery, have risks. You and your doctor should talk about these risks and decide together what's best for you.¹

Non-Surgical Treatments

Changing your daily activities can help protect your hip joint and slow the progress of osteoarthritis.² Try to do less of the things that make your hip hurt, like climbing stairs. Switching to activities like swimming or cycling can be easier on your hips than running or playing tennis. Losing weight can reduce the stress on your hip, helping to lessen pain and improve function.²

Physical therapy can help you move better and feel less pain if you have mild to moderate hip arthritis. This is recommended based on high-quality evidence. Getting a corticosteroid shot in your hip can also help reduce pain and improve how well your hip functions, but only for a short time. However, hyaluronic acid shots are not recommended for hip arthritis because they do not work better than a placebo. They are also not FDA approved for use in hips.¹

Surgical Treatments

If non-surgical treatments do not help, your doctor might suggest surgery. There are different types of surgery, each with its own pros and cons. In a total hip replacement, the damaged parts of your hip are replaced with new metal, plastic, or ceramic parts. In hip resurfacing, the damaged bone and cartilage in the socket are replaced with a metal shell, but the femur head is capped with metal instead of being removed.² An osteotomy, rarely used, involves realigning the bones to take pressure off the hip joint.²

There are different ways to do hip replacement surgery, and no single method is the best for

everyone. If you can take them safely, NSAIDs (like ibuprofen) can help reduce pain and improve movement. This is strongly recommended.¹

After hip replacement surgery, doing exercises at home or with a physical therapist can help you recover better. This is supported by high-quality evidence.¹ By understanding these treatments and working with your doctor, you can manage hip osteoarthritis effectively.

Taking care of your hip osteoarthritis involves understanding your treatment options and working with your doctor to find what's best for you. Remember, with the right care, you can manage your symptoms and improve your quality of life.

References:

1. American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Management of Osteoarthritis of the Hip Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guideline. <https://www.aaos.org/globalassets/quality-and-practice-resources/osteoarthritis-of-the-hip/oah-cpg.pdf>. Accessed July 10, 2024.
2. American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Osteoarthritis of the Hip. <https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/osteoarthritis-of-the-hip/>. Accessed July 10, 2024.

This summary was written by the Committee on Healthcare Safety.

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Additional resources for patients are available at [OrthoInfo.org](https://www.OrthoInfo.org).