

Hip Arthritis

What is hip arthritis?

Hip arthritis is deterioration of the cartilage of the hip joint. The hip is a ball-and-socket joint with the ball at the top of the thighbone (the femoral head). The ball is separated from the socket (the acetabulum) by cartilage. The cartilage acts as a slippery coating between the ball and the socket that allows the ball to glide and rotate smoothly when the leg moves. The labrum, a strong cartilage that lines the outer rim of the socket, provides stability.

When cartilage in the hip is damaged, it becomes rough. Thinning of cartilage narrows the space between the bones. In advanced cases, bone rubs on bone, and any movement can cause pain and stiffness. When there is friction at any point between bones, it can also lead to bone spurs — bone growths on the edges of a bone that change its shape.

Types of arthritis:

Osteoarthritis (OA)

Osteoarthritis is also known as 'degenerative joint disease'. It is the most common form of hip arthritis, and it can also affect other joints. It is often associated with wear and tear related to aging, and gradually progresses over time.

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is an autoimmune disease in which the immune system attacks healthy tissue in several joints of the body, including the hip. It causes inflammation of the synovial membrane, the capsule surrounding the hip joint. Inflammatory cells release substances that break down hip cartilage over time. RA typically affects smaller joints such as the wrist and fingers first and may not be noticeable in the hip until it causes symptoms. Rheumatoid arthritis can affect people of any age.

Post Traumatic Arthritis

Injury or trauma to the hip, such as hip fracture, may lead to development of arthritis later in life. Trauma such as falls, sports injuries and car accidents can damage the cartilage. While the injury itself may heal, the cartilage damage and any changes in the hip joint alignment can lead to arthritis years later.

Symptoms:

- Pain that can worsen due to certain movements and exercises. Pain can get worse after standing or walking for long periods of time or after a period of rest (e.g. first thing in the morning). Hip arthritis pain is commonly felt in the groin.
- Stiffness: making it difficult to move the hip or rotate the leg. This may make daily activities such as putting on socks and shoes difficult.
- Audible cracking, crunching or clicking sound on movement.
- Hip weakness: this is often due to reduced activity. Hip arthritis may cause you to move less due to pain, which makes the joint weaker and in turn, worsens symptoms.

How is knee arthritis diagnosed?

- Physical examination and medical history
- Xray- cartilage cannot be seen on X-ray, however narrowing of the joint space between the bones indicates loss of cartilage.
- Blood tests if (RA) is suspected

Treatment:

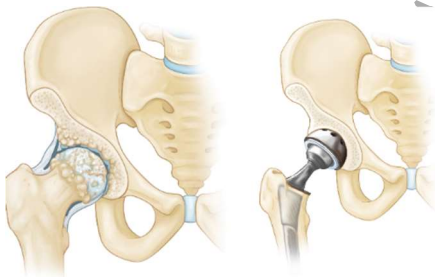
Treatment can vary depending on the type and stage of arthritis, age, severity of pain and impact on daily activities. Cartilage damage or loss cannot be reversed but there are ways to reduce pain and prevent or slow down further damage.

Non-Operative Treatments:

- Activity adjustments: Avoiding activities that aggravate hip arthritis such as running, jumping and other high-impact activities. Engaging in low-impact exercises, such as swimming and cycling and remaining physically active is important for managing symptoms.
- Physiotherapy: To improve strength and range of motion.
- Weight loss (if applicable): To reduce the stress on the joint.
- Walking aids: such as a walking stick or walker to provide support.
- Medications and injections: such as cortisone injections, anti-inflammatories and simple analgesia (Panadol osteo). Discuss with your doctor/surgeon for the most appropriate option for you.

Operative Treatments:

If your hip arthritis is severely affecting your quality of life, despite trying non-operative alternatives, your doctor may recommend a "total joint replacement" or "joint resurfacing".



Total Hip Replacement:

Total hip replacement is a surgical procedure in which the damaged cartilage and bone is removed from the hip joint and replaced with artificial components.

Hip Resurfacing:

In hip resurfacing, the femoral head is not removed, but is instead trimmed and capped with a smooth metal covering. The damaged bone and cartilage within the socket are removed and replaced with a metal shell, just as in a traditional total hip replacement. Unfortunately, not many patients are anatomically suitable for resurfacing.

