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## **Arthritis of the Hip**

Like other joints that carry your weight, your hips may be at risk for “wear and tear” arthritis. *Osteoarthritis* is the most common form of the disease. The smooth articular cartilage (cushion) that helps your hip joint glide may wear thin. Your first sign may be some discomfort and stiffness in your groin, buttock, or thigh when you wake up in the morning. The pain flares when you’re active and gets better when you rest. You may also have knee pain radiating from your hip.

If you don’t get treatment for arthritis of the hip, the condition keeps getting worse until resting no longer relieves your pain. The hip joint gets stiff and inflamed. Bone spurs might build up at the edges of the joint. When the cartilage wears away completely, the bones rub directly against each other. This makes it very painful for you to move. If you become less active to avoid the pain, the muscles controlling your joint get weak, and you may start to limp.

You’re more likely to get arthritis if you have a family history of the disease. You’re also at risk if you are elderly, obese, had a childhood hip condition, or have an injury that puts stress on your hip. You can also get arthritis if you don’t have any risk factors!

**Treatment Options:** While you cannot reverse the effects of arthritis, early nonsurgical treatment may help you avoid a lot of pain and disability. Surgery can help if your condition is severe, the nonsurgical treatment has failed, and your quality of life is compromised by your hip pain. It is important to remember that ultimately it is your decision if and when to have a hip replacement!

**Nonsurgical Treatment:** If you have early arthritis of the hip, the first treatment may be:

- Rest your hip from overuse (avoid running, jumping, or high impact activity)
- Follow a physical therapy program of gentle, regular exercise that consists of low impact activities – swimming, water aerobics, walking on flat land, cycling, or elliptical machines. This should focus on muscle strengthening and maintaining your range of motion.
- Use nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications like aspirin, naproxen, ibuprofen, etc. for pain (if you have no contraindications – check with your medical doctor first!)
- You may need to lose weight if you are overweight.
- You may need to use a cane as the arthritis progresses

**Surgical Treatment:** Hip replacement surgery is the mainstay in the surgical treatment of hip arthritis – this decision should be made in cooperation between you, your family,

your medical doctor, and orthopaedic surgeon. Dr. Dolan is also trained in joint preservation and arthroscopy for the hip and will discuss these options if you are a candidate. There are many options for hip replacement surgery that you should discuss with your surgeon. Hip replacement surgery is one of the medical miracles of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, alleviates pain, and allows people to resume active and enjoyable lives. For more information about hip arthritis and hip replacement surgery, please visit: [www.aaos.org](http://www.aaos.org) or [www.aahks.org](http://www.aahks.org)