



Osteoarthritis, Hip (Degenerative Arthritis, Arthritis, Degenerative Joint Disease)

DESCRIPTION

Articular cartilage is the white, firm, rubbery, very smooth tissue that lines the ends of the bones in a joint. It is so smooth that cartilage rubbing on cartilage is smoother than ice rubbing on ice. Arthritis is degeneration of the articular cartilage at a joint, usually with the growth of bone “spurs” that can inflame the surrounding tissue, including the joint lining (*arthro* means joint, and *itis* means inflammation). Arthritic inflammation includes thinning of the fluid within the joint and swelling of the joint. In the hip, it involves the joint where the thigh bone or ball of the joint (femoral head) meets the socket (acetabulum) of the pelvis.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Joint stiffness and pain, often felt in the groin, the front of the hip, and occasionally in the thigh
- Start-up pain and stiffness upon arising from sleep or when getting up to walk after prolonged sitting or standing
- Aching that increases with weather changes, especially with cold, damp, or rainy weather
- Loss of hip motion
- Difficulty putting on socks or shoes
- Difficulty getting off a toilet or out of a chair or car
- Limping
- Crepitation (a crackling sound) or grating sounds with hip movement (sometimes)
- Weakness of the hip and/or thigh muscles that can result in kneecap pain and pain after sitting for prolonged periods, when getting up from a seated position, and with kneeling, squatting, and going up or down hills

CAUSES

- The exact cause of osteoarthritis is unknown, but it appears to be a combination or interaction of biologic, mechanical, biochemical, inflammatory, genetic, and immunologic factors.
- Previous joint injury, such as a fracture or dislocation, from falling or landing on the hip may lead to arthritis.
- Surgery may result in degenerative arthritis.
- Hip dysplasia reduces the area of contact between the femoral head (ball) and acetabulum (socket), because the socket is not deep enough. This increases the load on the socket, resulting in wearing down of the articular cartilage.
- Hip impingement from overcoverage of the socket or loss of the offset between the femoral head and the femoral neck may result in pinching of the two bones. This may injure the cartilage rim around the socket (labrum) and articular cartilage and may result in arthritis.

- Osteonecrosis, also known as *avascular necrosis* (AVN) or *bone death*, may be associated with arthritis, although the cause of AVN is often unknown; AVN is also associated with steroid use, alcohol abuse, and an injury, such as hip dislocation.

FACTORS THAT INCREASE RISK

- Obesity
- Occupations that stress the joints, such as dancing, playing football, or manual labor
- Running or jogging
- Stress on the joints caused by activity and aging (almost all people over age 50 have some osteoarthritis)
- Injury to the joint or joint lining
- Breaking a bone or dislocating the hip joint
- Hip dysplasia (seen often in dancers)
- Hip impingement (femoroacetabular impingement)
- Osteonecrosis or avascular necrosis
- Loose joints

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Maintain a normal weight for your height and body structure.
- Be physically active, but avoid activities that lead to joint injury, especially after age 40.
- Regular stretching and yoga exercises are often beneficial.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Symptoms can usually be relieved, but joint changes are permanent and progressive. Pain may begin as a minor irritant, but it can become severe enough to interfere with daily activities and sleep.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Arthritis is sometimes crippling.
- Muscles around the affected joints, particularly the thigh and hip muscles, may become smaller and weaker because of decreased use as a result of pain.
- Motion in the joint may be lost.
- Arthritis tends to be progressive.

GENERAL TREATMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The overall treatment plan for arthritis involves understanding the disorder, so the treatment plan, including rehabilitation, involves medications and supporting activities of daily living. Initial treatment consists of medication and