

Total Hip Arthroplasty (Total Hip Replacement)

Definition: A total hip replacement is a surgical procedure that replaces the femoral head (ball) with a stemmed implant and resurfaces the hip socket (acetabulum) with a new cup implant.

Why would I need a Total Hip Arthroplasty?

Like other joints that carry your weight, your hips may be at risk for "wear and tear" arthritis (osteoarthritis), the most common form of arthritis. The smooth and glistening covering (articular cartilage) on the ends of your bones that helps your hip joint glide may wear thin.

You are more likely to get it if you have a family history of the disease. You are also at risk if you are elderly, obese, or have an injury that puts stress on your hip cartilage. You can develop osteoarthritis if you do not have any risk factors. Other causes of hip pain leading to loss of cartilage are rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune diseases, avascular necrosis of the hip, malformation of the hip (dysplasia), post traumatic arthritis and metabolic bone diseases.

Symptoms

Your first sign of hip arthritis may be a bit of discomfort and stiffness in your groin, buttock, or thigh when you wake up in the morning. The pain flares when you are active and gets better when you rest.

If you do not 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, bones rub directly against each other. This makes it very painful for you to move and your hip gets stiff. If you become less active to avoid the pain the muscles controlling your joint get weak, and you may start to limp.

Diagnosis

Dr. Wertz will determine how much the disease has progressed by performing a physical exam. Both hips will probably be X-rayed to check if hip joint space has changed, and if you have developed bone spurs or other abnormalities

Treatment

While you cannot reverse the effects of osteoarthritis, early nonsurgical treatment may help you avoid a lot of pain and disability and slow progression of the disease. Total hip replacement can help you if your condition is already severe.

Nonsurgical Treatment

If you have early stages of osteoarthritis of the hip, the first treatment may be:

- Rest
- Follow a physical therapy program
- Use nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications like ibuprofen for pain
- Get enough sleep each night
- You may need to work on losing weight



Surgical Treatment

If you have later stages of osteoarthritis, your hip joint hurts when you rest at night, and/or your hip is severely deformed, Dr. Wertz may recommend total hip replacement surgery (arthroplasty) or a hip resurfacing procedure. A total hip replacement will cure your pain and improve your ability to walk. You may need crutches or a walker for a while after total hip replacement. Rehabilitation is important after total hip arthroplasty to restore the flexibility in the hip and work your muscles back into shape