

Minimally Invasive Total Hip Replacements

By Ron Romanelli, M.D.
Orthopedic Center of Illinois

I wanted to share some information with you regarding a new minimally invasive hip replacement procedure that has greatly benefited a number of our patients. This minimally invasive hip procedure allows for faster rehabilitation and recovery time, a shorter hospital stay, and a minimally invasive 3 to 5-inch incision in the hip allowing for quicker, easier pain relief when compared to the standard hip replacement. Osteoarthritis affects 21 million individuals in the United States. This is a degenerative joint disease, or condition in which the smooth articular cartilage normally allowing for frictionless motion is causing friction, pain, discomfort and disability secondary to the cartilage wear process.

There are other conditions of the hip which occasionally account for pain and discomfort such as traumatic arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, avascular necrosis (loss of blood supply to the ball), and other inflammatory arthritic conditions. All of these conditions, though, can cause loss of movement of the hip joint, progressive pain and discomfort in the hip joint and difficulty living with the pain and discomfort of the hip.

Usually based on your history, as well as the examination, an appointment with your orthopedic surgeon to discuss your symptoms will usually lead to the diagnosis of your hip problem. Occasionally hip pain can be referred from the back, but usually groin pain, thigh pain, buttock pain can be attributed to an early hip arthritis condition. Standard x-rays are used and occasionally CT scans or magnetic resonance imaging is used to help diagnose your problem. Once the problem is identified, it is attempted to be treated in a conservative fashion, including exercises, weight loss, anti-inflammatory medications, and pain medications. If the pain persists, though, and becomes too disabling and causing too much pain or discomfort, then a hip replacement is a very viable option to help you with your pain and discomfort. There are approximately 400,000 hip replacements done per year to alleviate pain and discomfort. The success rate is usually 98% effective for pain control, as well as return to a normal lifestyle and performing normal daily activities. There are potential complications with hip replacement including infection, blood clots, hip dislocation, and limb length inequality, but the majority of the time these minimal risks are far outweighed by the benefits of pain relief and having a normal lifestyle.

Traditionally hip replacements have been done through an 10 to 14-inch incision which requires normally four days in the hospital and slow progressive weight bearing with walker and cane, but with this newer technique, we have decreased the hospital stay, reducing it at least by one to two days, making a smaller incision. Only removing the diseased portion of the hip through the small incision approach allows for less pain, less discomfort, faster rehabilitation and a decreased hospital stay. We have experienced excellent success with this technique and have assisted patients because of the decreased pain and improvement in mobility. People feel better postoperatively, use less pain medicine

and go home sooner. The technique is performed utilizing special instrumentation designed with the patient in mind. Basically, being able to place the instruments in proper locations allows us visualization to perform a hip replacement. We allow full weight bearing postoperatively and patients can walk quicker, easier, with less pain, and find significant success with this procedure. We are pleased to offer this procedure at the Orthopedic Center of Illinois and would be happy to discuss this minimally invasive surgical procedure because we feel very strongly that this new procedure allows patients to continue the quality of life that they have come to enjoy. For more information, you can access another web site at www.pacewithlife.com.

