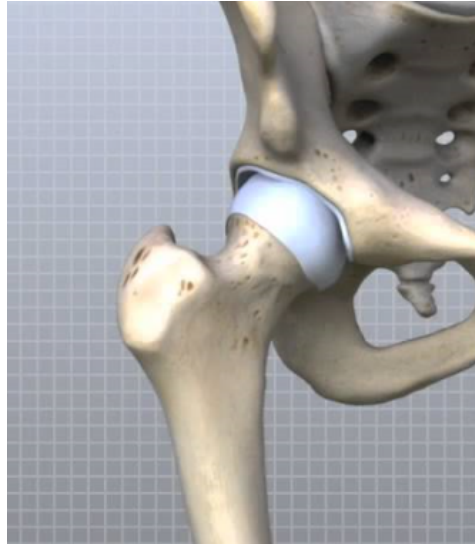


Hip pain



The hip joint is a synovial joint made up of the end of the thigh bone and the socket from your pelvis. Each bone is covered in a shiny substance called articular cartilage. The hip is held together by a capsule and then there are large thick ligaments which help to keep it on in one place. These help to stabilise the hip and keep it in position, they are immensely strong and difficult to damage.

So what causes pain?

As you get older this wears thinner and can give you pain. This is the case with most arthritis in the hip. Also your hip muscle and capsule that surround the hip joint can get inflamed and tight and causing pain often called “irritable hip”. This in turn can cause muscle weakness and wasting.

Sometimes a pocket of fluid on the outside of your hip becomes irritated giving you pain. This is called your trochanteric bursa. You can treat this by trying not to lie on this side at night, using a padded top cover over your mattress, losing weight rubbing a NSAID gel into the affected area and exercising.

Medication

There are a number of different tablets and creams available. Painkillers such as Paracetamol and Ibuprofen may help which can be bought over the counter in most shops and pharmacies. It is important that you take them as described on the packet regularly and at the recommended dose to help you control the pain whilst allowing you to continue exercising. Don't wait until your pain is severe before taking painkillers. You shouldn't take Ibuprofen or Aspirin if you're pregnant or have asthma, indigestion or an ulcer until you've checked with your doctor or pharmacist. Medication can have side effects so you should read the label carefully and check with your pharmacist if you have any queries. If over-the-counter medication doesn't work, your doctor may prescribe stronger painkillers or cream, which you can rub directly onto the hip.

Physiotherapy

You can self-refer yourself on line to the local physiotherapy departments. They can show your stretches and exercises to treat your hip. Injections and acupuncture also can help.

How can I help myself?

If the hip pain is affecting your mobility and your ability to exercise then these simple steps may help.

Losing weight If you carry excess body weight then this will have an impact on your hip pain. It also wears articular cartilage out more quickly if you have a high BMI.

Exercise This can help by keeping the joint supple and strong which will help with the pain, swimming walking and cycling are all good for the joint. However always start with a little and build up the amount of exercise over time.

Injections Sometimes corticosteroid injections into the trochanteric area of the hip can help to reduce some of the pain arrived from the soft tissue inflammation around the outside of the hip. These can be used episodically but should not be repeated multiple times as they can cause some soft tissue and tendon erosion long term.

Surgery

Surgery can be considered when conservative options have been exhausted. 1 in 10 people are disappointed with the outcome of their surgery, so surgery should be considered carefully. If you can manage your lifestyle with the hip you have then you should continue with this. When you feel you can no longer cope then further options can be considered. However there are many risk factors involved.