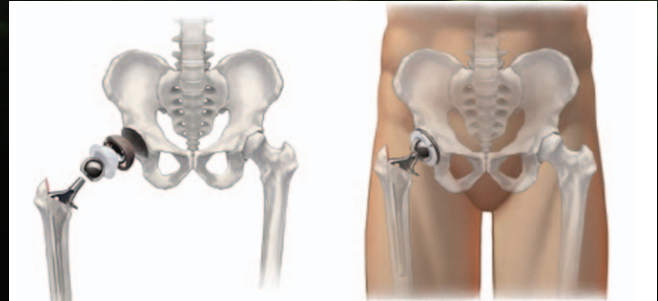


Less Is More

Minimally Invasive Surgery Moves to Hips

By Anthony Shaia, MD



When arthritis attacks the hip, it causes pain and stiffness. Many people have a painful limp, difficulty getting their shoes on and off, or trouble getting in and out of cars. When arthritis medication no longer alleviates the pain or activity levels become limited, it's time to discuss hip replacement options with an orthopaedic surgeon.

Hip replacement has been used for more than 25 years to relieve the discomfort and disability of arthritis. This procedure has seen many advances in the past few years. New materials show a decrease in wear. New pain-management techniques reduce postoperative pain, and new, less invasive approaches speed recovery. In addition, classes taught by nurses and physical therapists better prepare patients for the procedure and the rehabilitation that follows.

Advanced Developments

In the past, total hip replacements did not perform well in young patients, particularly those under 50 years old. The plastic liner in the hip socket tended to wear out, and the plastic particles generated in the process would often soften the bone around the replaced hip. Physicians now use new materials that drastically reduce or eliminate such deterioration.

New, specially treated plastics increase hip replacement life from 15 or 20 years up to 25 or 30 years. Some new hip replacements have no plastic at all. One design uses an all-metal socket or a ceramic socket liner

with a ceramic ball. These developments occurred over the last few years and offer hope to patients previously considered too young for hip replacement.

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I have used a less invasive approach to hip replacement since 2002. This technique, in conjunction with a more aggressive physical therapy program, results in less pain after surgery, less need for a blood transfusion, and earlier discharge from the hospital. Patients can also return to physical activity much earlier. Many can even resume sports such as golf and swimming within eight weeks of surgery.

Great Expectations

Together with Henrico Doctors' Hospital on Forest Ave., I have also developed a

presurgery education program for patients and their families. "Joint Camp" helps better prepare patients. It gives them a full understanding of the surgery and sets realistic after-surgery expectations. If you are having a hip replacement, you will meet with a nurse and a physical therapist from our Joint Replacement Center. Your rehab begins before you even undergo the surgery.

Through this education, patients have less anxiety before surgery and participate more fully in rehabilitation afterward. This approach results in quicker recoveries and fewer postoperative problems.

These new advances in hip replacement help relieve pain and disability and hasten the return to a full lifestyle. With the new designs, we can offer the procedure to more patients. So if you suffer from a painful, arthritic hip, talk to your physician about treatment. 🧠



Anthony Shaia, MD, received his medical degree from the Medical College of Virginia. He specializes in joint replacement surgery of the hip and knee. Among his other achievements, Dr. Shaia was recently involved in developing a minimally invasive hip replacement surgery that speeds postoperative recovery time significantly.