

What Is Hip Replacement?

Hip replacement surgery removes the damaged parts of your hip joint and replaces them with new, artificial parts. If your hip causes you pain because of arthritis, injury or age, hip replacement surgery may be your best option to live pain free.

First, let's take a look at the hip. Two of the largest weight-bearing joints in your body, you use your hips to do almost every physical activity every day. The hip is made up of two main parts - a ball at the top of the thighbone that fits into a rounded socket in your pelvis. A smooth layer of cartilage covers both sides of the joint, cushioning the bones.

A thin, smooth tissue covers the other surfaces of the hip joint and releases a special fluid. This fluid enables the bones to glide against each other and move smoothly. In a healthy hip, all of these parts work together without pain. But over time - with injury, arthritis, disease, or just from daily use - parts of your hip can weaken. When the cartilage wears away and can no longer cushion the bones, they rub together leading to pain, inflammation, and stiffness. This is called arthritis, the most common cause of chronic hip pain.

Your healthcare provider will decide the best surgery option for you based on your level of pain, your medical history, and the amount of damage to your hip, in order to restore joint function and relieve your pain. Total hip replacement surgery usually lasts about one to two hours.

During surgery, your healthcare provider will remove the damaged cartilage and bones and replace them with a new joint made of metal, plastic or ceramic. Special surgical cement may be used to attach the new joint parts to your existing natural bone and hold them in place. Your surgeon will carefully align the new joint to restore your hip function and relieve your pain.

When having hip replacement surgery, it is important that you prepare for the surgery before you have it. This can help your recovery go smoothly. Talk to your healthcare provider about ways you can prepare for your hip replacement.

Follow the instructions given and begin to do your pre-operative exercises now. The stronger your leg muscles are before surgery, the easier it will be for you to regain strength after surgery. You use your hips all day, every day. If they cause you pain, total hip replacement surgery can help.