

Orthopaedic Connection

Muscle Strains In The Thigh

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Boy, do I ever know a lot about this one since it happened to me.

We go to Cedar Point every month during the season and stay a few days at the Breakers Hotel at the Park. My wife, Alice and I line up early at one of the gates and when the park opens we run about 500 yards to the Millennium Force Coaster to be among the first to ride it each day.

Last year we took off as usual and I had gone only about 100 feet when I got this extremely severe pain in my thigh that almost made me collapse. I have never had anything so painful in my life. After a short time I started up again and limped and staggered to the ride. I went on the ride never to be deterred.

What Is It?

A muscle strain also called a pull or tear is a fairly common injury in sports (and I found out in coaster riders!). The thigh has 3 sets of strong muscles.

- Hamstring muscles in the back
- Quadriceps muscles in the front
- Adductor muscles on the medial or inside

Muscle strains happen when one of these muscle groups is stretched beyond its limit, tearing the muscle fibers.

Symptoms Of A Tear

The pain in one of the muscle groups in the thigh is sudden and severe (as I found out). A popping or snapping sensation may be felt as the muscle tears. Bruising usually occurs over a wide area of the thigh in a few days because blood vessels are also torn with the muscle. The area around the injury is tender to touch and usually swollen.

Diagnosis

I don't advise trying to diagnose this yourself, which I did.

If I am examining you however, I will, as always listen first and find out exactly how it happened. Next, I need to carefully examine the entire leg from the hip to the foot. I can't assume it is a muscle injury because it could be something else like a bone, ligament or nerve injury.

X-rays are needed because you can miss a fracture if good x-rays are not taken.

Injuries occur in one of the 3 muscle groups, not in all of them.

Muscle strains are graded according to their severity.

- A grade 1 strain is mild and heals in days to a few weeks
- A grade 3 strain is a severe tear of the muscle group and may take months to heal. This is what I had.
- A grade 2 of course is somewhere in between.

There is quite a bit more to cover so I better dismiss class at this point and see you next week, O.K.

But before you go let me leave you with this.

Factoid

Milk is good for your bones, but isn't much fun at 5 O'clock cocktail hour. A study of over two thousand men and postmenopausal women showed that those who had 1 - 2 glasses of beer or wine daily had 8% denser bones.

Beer is high in silicon, a mineral that promotes bone formation. Wine has antioxidants, which protect against bone loss.

Be moderate however, as excess alcohol can harm bones and the rest of your body also.

Log onto www.orthopodsurgeon.com, which leads to Your Orthopaedic Connection. It has everything you need to know about muscle injury and everything else I treat in the office and hospital.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush