

Treatment of Hip Arthritis

Management of true hip arthritis as you can imagine depends on the degree of arthritis present. I don't like to sound like a broken record, but the only way you can initiate proper treatment is by accurate diagnosis based on careful history, thorough exam and good plain x-rays.

There are several degrees of severity of hip arthritis. Until I figure out where the patient is on that scale of severity I can't begin the best treatment. You don't use the same treatment for all patients. I am continually amazed how different patients are, one from the other and how you have to tailor the treatment to that person.

Arthritis can look mild on the x-ray, but the person may be having a great deal of pain. If they have had no treatment so far I would probably choose a stronger anti-inflammatory medication and possibly a pain pill to try to get control.

Physical therapy might be able to help if there is not too much stiffness. Exercises could be continued at home long after the therapy ended.

A cane is a great way to decrease stress on a bad hip, but most people won't use one. Too bad. A cane can help.

Injection

To truly treat the arthritic hip directly by injection, the patient has to come to the hospital x-ray department and the hip injection is placed directly into the hip joint space with x-ray control. Any injection in the office setting is not an injection directly into the hip joint. This can help some patients, but not all.

Hip Resurfacing

It is an operation that has some limited place in treatment. It replaces the surface of the ball and socket. It tends to be done in somewhat younger patients. Unfortunately patients hear or read about this and come in asking for it, but it may not be at all what that person needs. I have a problem with direct patient advertising because people lock onto something and if you don't agree with them they are suspicious.

Total Hip Replacement

If a person's joint is completely worn out and pain is growing worse a total hip replacement may be all that will help them. No one comes into the office demanding that I do surgery. Our task is to properly evaluate

the problem and give the person some choices, which could possibly include a total hip replacement.

I use a total hip that is called AML. It is the best one for my patients because it has lasted more than twenty years in 95% of the patients who have had it and it is still going. That is very hard to beat. I feel great confidence that it is the best for my patients. It has application to a large variety of ages because there are different parts for different ages etc.

Often patients say "I'm too old to have hip surgery". It really depends more on the person's state of health than their age. Some 90 year old patients are in better health than 70 year olds. Age is definitely relative and should not be used as the only criteria.

Outcome

After total hip replacement 90 - 95% of our patients say they would have it done again in a minute. They are sorry they waited so long etc. Patients say it changed their lives. They can walk comfortably and do things they haven't done in years.

All Orthopaedic Surgery problems including hip problems can be evaluated by Dr. Haverbush at the Lakeview Community Wellness Center in Lakeview or at the office in Alma at 315 Warwick Dr., Alma, Michigan.

Please call 989-463-6092 for information or to schedule an appointment.

Future Lakeview Community Wellness Center Clinic dates are November 14, 2008 and November 21, 2008.

Please don't forget there is a wealth of accurate information about hip problems and all the other Orthopaedic conditions I treat on the office teaching website www.orthopodsurgeon.com. Please log on and check it out.

We are happy to answer questions from readers. You can e-mail me at orthopodsurgeon@hotmail.com or write to me at 315 Warwick Dr., Alma, Michigan 48801.

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

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush