

# Nine Things You Need to Know About Hip Pain

The Specialists at DeKalb Medical Joint Solutions Center Answer Your Questions

by Lorrie Bryan

**D**o you have pain in and around your hip joint? Is it limiting your daily activities or even keeping you awake at night? You may be among the thousands of Americans suffering with hip pain. The good news is treatments for persistent pain, including total hip replacement surgery, are easier and more effective than ever, especially now that Decatur has its *own* joint replacement surgery center.

Wondering if you could be a candidate for hip replacement and what to expect from the surgery?

We asked the experts at DeKalb Medical's Joint Solutions Center. The Center is housed inside one of the top hospitals in the nation. DeKalb Medical at North Decatur is now ranked in the top 5 percent of U.S. hospitals for clinical excellence by HealthGrades® (2009).

# Our Doctors



Physical Therapist Rachel Walton-Mouw helps patient James Long head home just two days after total knee replacement.

## 1. What causes hip pain?

Hip pain can be caused by a number of factors including wear and tear (repetitive activity), accidents and injuries, arthritis, and poor blood circulation.

## 2. How do I find out if hip replacement is the best treatment for my pain?

Get a thorough evaluation and diagnosis, which may include X-rays and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI). Only opt for surgery when all the non-surgical interventions have failed (i.e., weight loss, exercise, physical therapy, anti-inflammatory medicines, and joint fluid therapy). Your doctor may perform a hip arthroscopy, which is less invasive than hip replacement.

## 3. Is hip replacement the only answer?

Hip replacement may not be the answer for everyone. Instead, your doctor may perform a hip arthroscopy, which can sometimes postpone or even eliminate the need for a hip replacement. "An arthroscopy can rule out other problems that produce hip pain but don't require total hip replacement," explains Dr. Scott Barbour. The procedure uses small incisions to remove bone spurs and joint debris and/or other conditions that may be causing hip pain.

## 4. How has hip replacement surgery changed over the years?

Because of recent innovations, hip replacement surgery is easier and better than ever. Advances in surgical technique and materials have led to improved function and faster recovery for patients. "Today, many surgeons use a mini-incision technique which results in a significant reduction in postoperative discomfort and shorter hospital stays. Improvements in the implant materials such as the metal on metal bearing surfaces result in greater range of motion and hip stability and increased durability of the implant," affirms Dr. Thomas Branch.

## 5. How do I choose an orthopedic specialist?

Ask your primary care physician for a recommendation and arm yourself with information.

Book an orthopedic consultation and don't be afraid to ask the doctor these questions: How many hip replacement surgeries have you performed? What is your success rate? How frequently do your patients experience infections?

## 6. Will I be free of pain after surgery?

"Surgical pain is present after surgery but the pain of an arthritic hip is gone, and patients are generally up and walking the next day with pain relief that is nothing less than phenomenal," explains Dr. Jeff Traub.

## 7. How long till I can resume normal activities?

Depending on your overall health and the success of your rehabilitation therapy, a complete recovery usually takes from three to six months. Don't hurry the healing process. "Patients usually feel so good that they push themselves too quickly, and some experience an increase in pain at about the third month from too much activity. However, a year after surgery, it is hard to tell which hip was operated on," Dr. Branch adds.

## 8. How long does a hip implant last?

A hip replacement should last about 20 years depending on your age and activity level. "Innovations in design and the use of better materials have increased the longevity of implants greatly. We expect that more than 90 percent of the hip replacements we are doing today will last more than 20 years," says Dr. Traub.

## 9. Are there activities that I should avoid to protect the implant?

Yes. "I tell my patients to avoid high-impact activities such as heavy-duty running, high-impact aerobics and jumping from high heights," says Dr. Damien Doute. "I also tell my patients to avoid being overweight—that tends to wear out joints more quickly." You should also limit: sitting on low seating surfaces and chairs, kneeling for a prolonged amount of time, repetitive lifting or pushing heavy objects.

## Meet the Orthopedic Specialists at DeKalb Medical

Ranked in the Top 10 in the Nation for Overall Orthopedics by HealthGrades® in 2010



**Damien A. Doute, M.D.**, received his medical degree from Harvard Medical School and is fellowship-trained in spine surgery from the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions

where he also completed his residency. Dr. Doute specializes in helping patients with degenerative disease, scoliosis, and other orthopedic conditions.



**Scott Barbour, M.D.**, is a magna cum laude graduate of the St. Louis University School of Medicine and is a former All-American rugby player.

Dr. Barbour's combined talents as a competitive athlete and skilled orthopedic surgeon allow him to expertly meet the needs of both recreational and professional athletes.



**Jeff Traub, M.D.**, received his medical degree from New York University School of Medicine and completed a fellowship in sports medicine at the

Christ Hospital. A former assistant team physician to the Cincinnati Bengals, Dr. Traub specializes in general orthopedics and sports medicine.

**Tom Branch, M.D.**, received his medical degree from Emory University where he also teaches. Dr. Branch has served as the team orthopedic surgeon for Morehouse College, Georgia Perimeter College and several local high schools. The former chief of Surgery for Northlake Medical Center, Dr. Branch is currently the President of University Orthopaedics located in Atlanta and Decatur.

## Want to Learn More?

Attend a Free "Doc Talk" Sponsored by the DeKalb Medical Joint Solutions Center

**Arthroscopic Hip Procedure**, January 20, 2010, 7 to 8 p.m.

**On Bended Knee**, February 18, 2010, 7 to 8 p.m.

**What You Need to Know about Joint Replacements**, February 26, 2010, 7 to 8 p.m.

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