



**KNOW YOUR PHYSICIAN
MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION**

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What is hip arthroscopy?

Hip arthroscopy is a surgical procedure that involves looking into the hip joint with a small camera (arthroscope) and treating painful conditions. Arthroscopy can be used to treat a variety of hip conditions, including labral tears, hip impingement, articular cartilage injuries, and the removal of loose bodies in the joint. Eventually, all of these conditions can lead to arthritis and the need for hip replacement. However, this minimally invasive hip procedure gives patients the pain relief they need with tiny scars and minimal postoperative pain. Patients are released from the hospital the same day they undergo surgery so they can begin their recovery process and return to their usual activities.

The incisions are typically the width of a straw tip. Through these tiny holes, the surgeon inspects the joint to find the source of the pain using a camera called the arthroscope. Specialized surgical instruments are used to shave, trim, cut, stitch or smooth the damaged areas.



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Hip Arthroscopy Patient Information



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What conditions can be treated with hip arthroscopy?

•Labral Tear

The labrum of the hip is a cuff of thick tissue that surrounds the hip socket. The labrum helps to support the hip joint. When a labral tear of the hip occurs, a piece of this tissue can become pinched in the joint causing pain and catching sensations.

•Loose Bodies

Loose bodies are pieces of cartilage that form within the joint. They look like small marbles floating within the joint space. These loose bodies can become caught within the hip during movements.

•Snapping Hip Syndrome

Snapping hip syndrome has several causes, some of which can be treated with hip arthroscopy. If something is catching within the hip joint, hip arthroscopy can be used to relieve this snapping. Also, hip arthroscopy can be used to perform a psoas tendon release in cases of internal snapping hip syndrome.

•Cartilage Damage

In patients with focal cartilage damage, meaning not widespread arthritis, hip arthroscopy may be helpful. These patients may sustain an injury causing a piece of cartilage to break away from the surface of the bone. These patients may benefit from removal of that piece of cartilage.

•Early Arthritis & Hip Impingement

Patients who have arthritis pain generally will not benefit from a hip arthroscopy. However, patients in the early stages of arthritis may benefit from arthroscopy if bone spurs causing hip impingement (pinching) are smoothed away. Removal of bone spurs causing hip impingement may prevent the progression of hip arthritis.

•Sciatic Nerve Compression

Some patients may experience a deep sciatic nerve pain in their buttock region. Hip arthroscopy can be used to decompress the nerve if there are bands of scar tissue or muscle irritating the nerve.

What are the benefits to hip arthroscopy?

The benefit of hip arthroscopy is that the recovery is much simpler than for open hip surgery. Patients can typically put as much weight as tolerated on the hip immediately following surgery (check with your doctor as some procedures may limit weight bearing). In the first weeks after surgery, patients work on regaining motion around the joint, and gentle strengthening exercises. Typically, patients work with a physical therapist for assistance with these exercises and stretches.

Most patients can begin light activities (cycling, swimming) within a few weeks. Athletes most often take about 12 weeks for recovery. Again, there are specific procedures that may require a more lengthy rehabilitation, so check with your doctor about the specific plans for your recovery.

What are the possible complications from hip arthroscopy?

The most concerning complications of hip arthroscopy have to do with several important nerves and blood vessels that surround the joint. Nerve injury is uncommon, but can be a significant problem. The most commonly affected nerves include the sciatic nerve, the lateral femoral cutaneous nerve (sensation to the thigh), and the pudendal nerve. Injury to any of the nerves can cause pain and other problems.



Other possible complications from hip arthroscopy include potential injury to normal structures, infection, and continued pain after the surgery. The rate of these complications is low, but patients need to understand the potential prior to undergoing a hip arthroscopy.

What can patients expect after hip arthroscopy?

Usually, you will feel some discomfort in your hip. In addition, the discomfort can be experienced in the lower back, buttock, knee and ankle. The discomfort can normally be reduced with pain medications and cooling pads. In the majority, there will be some swelling in the groin, buttock and thigh. This is caused by the fluid used during the surgery. The swelling reduces over the following few days.

Is hip arthroscopy right for you?

Ask your physician if you are a candidate for hip arthroscopy so you can get back to doing what you love doing, faster!