



MUSCULOSKELETAL HEALTH NEWS

A new approach to *Hip Replacement Surgery*

Chances are good you know someone who has undergone hip replacement surgery – one of the most common orthopedic approaches to resolving the agonizing hip pain associated with severe arthritis.

During hip replacement surgery, the top ball portion of the thighbone (the head of the femur) as well as the damaged surface of the matching socket on the pelvis are removed and replaced with manmade implants that restore fluid, pain-free movement to the hip.

Traditionally, the surgeon takes a “posterior approach” to reaching the bones, making an incision in the buttocks area and splitting through the muscle to access the joint. But recent developments in both the surgical technique as well as the prosthesis hardware have created an “anterior” (through the front) option.

Clearly, any hip replacement operation is major surgery, but there are some important benefits to the patient who is an appropriate candidate for the anterior approach. For one, this procedure involves muscle separation rather than muscle splitting, so there’s potentially less

damage to the muscle. Additionally, the operation requires a smaller incision since the joint is closer to the surface and the surgeon doesn’t have so much muscle to deal with.

Those benefits translate into a smaller, less noticeable scar, a more natural feel, and potentially fewer post-operative restrictions. With conventional posterior hip surgery, there’s always some risk of dislocation during the first few weeks after surgery so these patients follow restrictions related to sleeping and sitting positions and crossing legs. But with the anterior approach the patient is immediately able to flex and cross legs with less risk of dislocation. Perhaps the biggest benefit is the fact that most anterior patients are more quickly back to work or back on the floor with the grandkids, and pretty much pain free.

For more information on the procedure or to arrange a consultation with one of OSMC’s joint replacement specialists, please call 574-264-0791.

