What Is It?

It sounds like something is jamming together, right? But how can the ball and socket hip joint do that? Good question. Let me explain.

Yes the hip does have an adequate and good range of motion. If some deformity develops around the socket or near the ball junction with the femoral neck there is trouble brewing and you don’t even know it.

These subtle changes can develop from injuries and they can “impinge” or jam together causing tissue (labral) damage in the hip joint.

Symptoms

Patients with this condition can range from teenage athletes to middle aged “weekend warriors”. Pain can come acutely from an injury, but most often develops insidiously over months (or longer) and grows worse until it becomes severe.

Pain is located in the groin and to the lateral side of the hip. Stiffness and limping develop. Climbing stairs is a problem as well as getting in and out of a car.

Diagnosis

There are certain classic tests we use to diagnose the condition. Plain x-rays may not show any abnormalities. If the doctor stops there the diagnosis of impingement may not be made.

MRI and CT have added greatly to our ability to diagnose the condition of hip impingement. MRI with contrast gives the most information. It is important to note that accurate MRI diagnosis is highly dependent on correct technique and a skilled radiologist interpreting the images.

What Else

Hip pain in all ages can have a variety of causes other than impingement. Some of these are muscle groin strain, tendinitis, bursitis, osteoarthritis, osteonecrosis, and bone tumors of the pelvis or spine.

Nonsurgical Treatment

A rehabilitation specialist familiar with hip dysfunction caused by impingement should be consulted. Not every physical therapist would be able to do this.

Hip joint injection done by a radiologist using special imaging can be diagnostic and therapeutic.

Anti-inflammatory medication might help (no opioids please!).

Surgery

Arthroscopic surgery of the hip joint is an emerging field within Orthopaedic Surgery. It has not achieved the status of knee arthroscopic surgery because the hip is a much different joint which is smaller in size and not nearly as accessible as the knee.

In the proper setting and depending on the severity of the hip joint problem some patients might experience some improvement in their symptoms after arthroscopic surgery.

Hopefully you have learned about a problem (hip impingement) that was rarely even diagnosed as a cause of hip pain 10 – 15 years ago.
My patients put their trust in me and what I do improves the quality of their lives.

Office Website and Gratiot County Herald Archive
You will be amazed at all the helpful information it contains.
All of the information pertains to everything I treat in the office and hospital.
Be well. Good health, good life, all the best to you.

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