

HIP PAIN AND ARTHRITIS FACTSHEET

Q Why do I have hip pain?

A Some of you have told us you have pain in your hips. Several issues can cause it, one of which is osteoarthritis (wear and tear to the bones and joints). This is more common and can happen to you at a younger age if:

- **You have hip damage caused by thalidomide**

Some of you might have known about this for some time, whilst others may only find out when they have an x-ray; but whatever the case, it causes the hip to wear out earlier.

- **You use your legs as an arm**

If you're using your legs more than most people, for a wider range of movements, this can also cause the hip joint to wear out earlier.

If the pain lasts longer than a few weeks, and is causing you to stop doing certain things, it's worth a visit to your GP to get an understanding of the cause of the pain. If your doctor feels that arthritis is the cause, they may suggest an X-ray to look at the bones in the hip and assess how severe the arthritis is.

Q If my hip pain is diagnosed as arthritis, what can help?

A Physiotherapy can help you keep the movement in your hips, through a range of gentle movement exercises and activities. The physio can also suggest exercises to help you maintain or improve the strength of the muscles around your hip joint, which will help later if you need an operation. They may also show you the best way to walk with your hip pain and how to use a walking stick, or crutch.

To find a physiotherapist, call the Trust or use the link below:

<https://www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/find-physiotherapist/find-physio>

Q I've heard pacing can help - what is it?

A Pacing is breaking your daily activities down into smaller chunks of time, and taking regular breaks before the pain comes on. Further information on pacing can be found here:

<https://www.thalidomidetrust.org/pacing-for-pain/>

Q Will weight loss help?

A Being overweight increases the strain on all your joints, especially the hip and knee joints. Losing weight can help reduce this strain, make activity easier and reduce pain.

Patient.co.uk have some great resources here:

<https://www.patient.info/healthy-living/weight-loss-weight-reduction>

Q Are there any medical treatments that can help?

A Heat pads and painkillers can also help you manage your pain.

If it becomes hard to tolerate, the next step could be a steroid injection in your hip. This is a

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good form of pain relief for some people and may delay you having to have surgery. It's difficult to predict how long the injection may last and whether another one may be helpful.

Find out more about steroid injections here:

<https://www.arthritis-health.com/treatment/injections/what-know-getting-cortisone-injection>

Q Will I need a hip replacement?

A When steroid injections are not helping, or not lasting long enough, it might be time to consider a hip replacement. If you're getting pain at night, it's also likely that you need surgery.

Ideally you should have a hip replacement before the muscles around the hip become weak and/or you develop a limp. Hip replacement surgery is now very successful.

Choosing a surgeon who is a **revision hip specialist** might be especially helpful in the long run. Whilst someone's first hip replacement is fairly straight forward, a hip revision specialist has the right level of skill to take a replacement hip out and put another one in. The Trust Medical Adviser can tell you who would be the best person to see.

Q What if I use my leg as an arm?

A If you have shorter upper limbs, and use your leg as an arm, the prospect of surgery may be quite daunting - but it needn't be. To make sure you keep a wider range of movement in the replacement hip, the surgeon can adjust the new hip and put in a slightly larger ball replacement.

Not all surgeons will have had experience of replacing this kind of hip; and they may wish to discuss it with a consultant who has operated on beneficiaries like you.

Surgeons at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital (RNOH) have this kind of experience so you might want to choose this hospital for your surgery.

Q Can the Trust help?

A If you'd like to talk about your pain, and getting help with it, have a chat with one of the Trust's Medical Advisers.

They can also ask a beneficiary who has had hip surgery to get in touch with you and give you an idea of what the operation will be like, the things you'll need to have ready to take to hospital with you, and what you'll need to have in place at home after the operation such as equipment, aids and extra help.

Read Carolyn's story to find out more about her experience:

<https://www.thalidomidetrust.org/carolyns-story/>