



**ST VINCENT'S
PRIVATE HOSPITAL**
MELBOURNE

A FACILITY OF ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA

COMMON HIP INJURIES

Treatment Guide



COMMON HIP INJURIES

Your daily movement hinges—literally—on your hips. Without smooth hip function, you'll struggle to walk, sit, stand, climb and run. After the age of 60, your hips have a one in four chance of running into trouble. Though hip problems are numerous, there are three issues in particular that medical professionals see most often:

OSTEOARTHRITIS OF THE HIP

Osteoarthritis is what happens when the cartilage lining your joints breaks down. Cartilage reduces friction in the joint and acts as a shock absorber, so when it's weakened, bone spurs called osteophytes grow on your bones, causing your hip to become painful, stiff and swollen.

[For more information, refer to our page on osteoarthritis of the hip.](#)

HIP FRACTURES

As you age, your bones weaken as a result of osteoporosis. Brittle bones are vulnerable to fractures, which result even from simple falls as you get older.

[For more information, refer to our page on hip fractures.](#)

GROIN INJURIES CAUSED BY HIP JOINT TEARS

Deep flexion and rotation of the hip during activities as simple as sitting or getting in and out of a car can lead to groin pain and tears in the hip joint (labral tears). Likewise, sporting activity that involves repetitive bending, twisting, squatting and kicking can also lead to hip joint tears. Labral tears left untreated and in pain can be associated with an increased risk of premature arthritis of the hip.

[For more information, refer to our page on groin injuries caused by hip joint tears.](#)



WHEN SHOULD YOU CONSULT A SPECIALIST FOR YOUR HIP PAIN?

An Orthopaedic Surgeon is a medical doctor with extensive training in the assessment, diagnosis and management of musculoskeletal injuries and diseases. Musculoskeletal refers to your bones, joints and muscles. Orthopaedic surgeons can undertake further training to sub-specialise and develop expertise in both surgical and non-surgical care treatment of hip pain.

Surgery is usually the last option doctors consider; they typically prefer non-invasive treatment like physiotherapy, exercise, weight control and pain management. However, if these treatments do not provide significant results or relieve pain, a hip specialist can help you choose the best surgical options for getting you back in action!

SIGNS YOUR HIP PAIN REQUIRES SPECIALIST HELP:

- Your pain is increasing or is severe
- You have trouble moving or bearing weight on your leg or hip
- Your hip swells, bleeds or shows signs of infection (fever, chills, redness)
- You've fallen or injured your hip
- You struggle with daily activities like walking, climbing stairs or sitting forward
- Your joint appears deformed

THE RISKS OF NOT TREATING HIP PAIN

If left untreated, hip pain can often get worse, to the point where you can't resume life as usual. In the case of hip fractures, the immobility it causes can shorten your life and leave you at risk of blood clots, bedsores, urinary tract infections, pneumonia, muscle loss and further weakened bones.



OSTEOARTHRITIS OF THE HIP

Osteoarthritis can develop slowly, but have an extremely debilitating effect on your quality of life.

TYPICAL SYMPTOMS

If you're suffering from osteoarthritis, you'll typically experience a dull ache in your groin area. You may also feel pain in your buttocks, thighs and knees. As arthritis progresses, your hip will become increasingly stiff, and you may experience difficulty walking. If arthritis becomes severe, your pain will be more constant and may affect your sleep and make simple tasks like putting on shoes and socks difficult.

COMMON CAUSES

The most common cause of osteoarthritis is femoro-acetabular impingement syndrome. Your risk increases with age, and a few other factors:

- An abnormally shaped hip joint (such as hip dysplasia, cam and pincer impingement)
- Injuries
- Carrying excess weight
- Genetics
- Inflammatory joint disease

THE FIX

The #1 goal of treatment is to relieve your pain, help you walk better and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Most cases of early osteoarthritis don't require surgery—instead, your doctor will recommend:

- Gentle physical activity (walking, gardening, exercise bike, swimming)
- Weight control and weight loss
- Painkillers
- Consider injectable gels
- Meditation and mindfulness to help with pain

HIP REPLACEMENTS

If you've been through conservative treatment and your hip pain is still unmanageable, your doctor may recommend a hip replacement. Minimally invasive hip replacements are now available for some patients. These advanced surgeries can be undertaken with small incisions that cause less muscle damage. With these modern techniques, patients can experience less pain and faster initial recovery times compared to traditional hip replacements techniques. The ultimate goals of hip replacement are a reduction in pain, improvement in mobility and reduction in disability. With modern implants, hip replacements can reasonably be expected to last 10-20 years.

HIP FRACTURES

Hip fractures are usually serious injuries and most often require surgery and extensive rehabilitation. Hip fractures are much more common in older age as a result of simple falls among osteoporotic individuals. Untreated, hip fractures can significantly affect your ability to live independently.

TYPICAL SYMPTOMS

Fracturing your hip after a fall is painful. It's likely that:

- You won't be able to get up
- It will hurt to move your leg
- Your leg may look shortened and rotated
- Your hip will have significant bruising and swelling

COMMON CAUSES

Most hip fractures occur in bone that has been weakened by osteoporosis. Risk factors for osteoporosis include:

- Age (loss of bone density is natural in later life)
- Gender (hip fractures are more common in women)
- Genetics (your genes strongly influence your bone strength)
- Poor nutrition (deficiencies in calcium and Vitamin D can weaken bones)
- Poor lifestyle (smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and a lack of exercise can all weaken bones)

Most hips fracture during a fall. The risk of falling increases with age, as a result of:

- Weaker muscles
- Balance problems
- Poor vision
- Side effects of medications

THE FIX

The vast majority of hip fractures require surgery. Prevention becomes the primary focus:

- If you're female and post-menopause, get your bone density checked by your GP (your GP can start you on medication and a management plan to help strengthen your bones)
- Perform regular weight-bearing exercises like walking, jogging and hiking
- Perform regular balance exercises
- Eat a balanced diet
- Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol consumption
- Set up your house to reduce your risk of falls (keep objects off stairs and floors, use slip-resistant bathmats and install grab bars in your bathtub)
- Take care in the garden, particularly after rain, and avoid situations that could lead to falls (e.g. standing on unsteady furniture and ladders)
- Get your vision checked

HIP REPLACEMENTS

There are three types of surgery to treat hip fractures. If your bones can be aligned properly, a surgeon may perform a hip repair, stabilising your bones with surgical screws, plates or rods. In more severe cases, your doctor may perform a partial hip replacement, replacing the end of your hip bone (femoral head) with prosthetic parts, or a full hip replacement, replacing your entire joint with artificial components.

Minimally invasive hip replacements are now available for some patients. These advanced surgeries can be undertaken with small incisions, and patients experience less pain and faster initial recovery times compared to traditional hip replacements. The ultimate goals of hip replacement are a reduction in pain, improvement in mobility and reduction in disability. With modern implants, hip replacements can reasonably be expected to last 10-20 years.



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TYPICAL SYMPTOMS

Groin pain caused by hip joint tears (labral tears) – you'll usually experience:

- Groin pain
- Pain aggravated by sitting, standing and twisting
- Muscle tightness in your groin, buttocks and thigh

COMMON CAUSES

Symptomatic labral tears in your hip can occur as early as your teenage years, and all the way through your life. The most common causes include:

- Cam and Pincer impingement
- Hip Dysplasia
- Repetitive extreme range of motions

THE FIX

Labral tears are better prevented than fixed, so be sure to:

- Warm up properly before sports/physical activity
- Stay physically active to keep muscles strong and agile
- Avoid 'overdoing it' when it comes to exercise

If you do strain or sprain a muscle during exercise:

- Rest the muscle
- Apply ice to swelling, and then heat once the swelling subsides
- Take nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs)
- Elevate the area to help with swelling

SURGERY

If your labral tear doesn't improve with conservative management and 3 months of physiotherapy, keyhole surgery (hip arthroscopy) may be the best option for your recovery.



EXPERIENCE.

The Difference.

ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE HOSPITAL MELBOURNE ORTHOPAEDIC CARE

St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne performed over 10,000 orthopaedic surgeries in 2018. We have an enviable reputation for orthopaedics in Australia and around the world. As a centre of excellence for orthopaedics, we attract local, interstate and international sports stars. Our commitment to the specialty is evident in the delivery of safe and high quality healthcare and is what really stands St Vincent's Private apart.

MELBOURNE'S LEADING ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

Many of the state's most experienced orthopaedic surgeons consult on site at St Vincent's Private Hospital or are located within immediate proximity. Our surgeons specialise in many areas of orthopaedic expertise like joint replacement surgeries including hip, knee, ankle, wrist, shoulder and elbow; orthopaedic interventions including sport medicine and injuries; and tumour and reconstructive surgery.

STATE OF THE ART THEATRES

Our theatres are equipped with the latest technology and instruments to support our surgeons in providing the best treatment plan for patients and to help patients achieve the best outcome. We are one of the first hospitals in Victoria to have the Mako Stryker system. Stryker's robotic-arm assisted surgery is a minimally invasive treatment option. The robotic arm is controlled by the surgeon and allows for tactile, auditory and visual feedback and limits the bone preparation to the diseased areas. It provides customised implant positioning, placement and real time adjustments for each individual patient.



HIGHLY EXPERIENCED TEAM

Our orthopaedic unit has dedicated nursing and allied health staff who are highly trained and well experienced in managing all orthopaedic conditions. Our primary theatre nurses have all undergone additional orthopaedic specialty training. All of which means our surgeons have a great sense of trust in our medical teams care and capacity to identify clinical issues.

ON-SITE REHABILITATION

Our purpose-built on-site inpatient rehabilitation facilities at both [East Melbourne](#) and [Werribee](#) hospitals provide assistance for patients recovering and reconditioning from surgery and injury.

Our outpatient rehabilitation programs continue to aid patients in their recovery even after they return home, and also includes vital exercise programs.

Our rehabilitation therapy spaces include brand new purpose built gymnasiums, indoor hydrotherapy pool with change rooms and shower facilities and therapy areas designed for practicing everyday occupations including our home-style kitchen.

PAEDIATRIC ORTHOPAEDIC

Our paediatric unit is the busiest and longest running private paediatric unit in Victoria. The unit is proud to have many highly regarded leaders in the field of paediatric orthopaedics mostly working both at The Royal Children's Hospital and privately at East Melbourne.

There are two on-site clinics catering to paediatric orthopaedic patients.

The [St Vincent's Kids Hip Dysplasia clinic](#) allows patients to see an orthopaedic hip specialist, with low radiation paediatric X-rays and ultrasounds all on-site. Paediatric bracing and orthotic services are also provided within the rooms, along with specialised physiotherapy and rehabilitation services.

The [St Vincent's Kids Sports Injury clinic](#) provides patients with the benefit of reduced waiting times to see a specialist. The clinic can provide patients with scanning, bracing and rehabilitation facilities in one easy location as well as timely access to surgical management if required.

ST VINCENT'S
Kids



ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE HOSPITAL MELBOURNE ACCREDITED HIP AND KNEE SURGEONS

EAST MELBOURNE AND KEW

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