

Deciding what to do about osteoarthritis of the hip

This short decision aid is to help you decide what to do about your hip osteoarthritis. You can use it on your own, or with your doctor, to help you make a decision about what's right for you at this time.

There are five main choices if you have osteoarthritis of the hip. You can choose:

- **Lifestyle changes**, including weight loss and exercise
- **Physical management**, including physiotherapy and occupational therapy
- **Treatments to manage pain**, including tablets you take by mouth, injections into the joint and self-help support
- **Complementary treatments**, including acupuncture and nutritional supplements
- **Surgery**, including hip resurfacing and total hip replacement. Surgery is usually for people with severe symptoms who have tried other treatments first.

What are my options?

	Lifestyle changes	Physical management	Treatments to manage pain	Complementary therapies	Surgery
What is the treatment?	<p>These are changes that you can make for yourself that may help improve your symptoms. Examples include losing weight (if you are overweight) and taking more exercise.</p>	<p>Physical management covers three main areas of treatment. Physiotherapy includes manual therapy and advice on exercise and self-management strategies. Occupational therapy includes advice on dealing with difficulties in your daily routine caused by your arthritis. Mobility aids may include walking aids, special footwear, or shoe inserts.</p>	<p>There are two main types of treatment to manage pain: medication and self-help. Pain medications are drug treatments designed to offer pain relief. Some can be bought from a pharmacy without a prescription, while others need to be prescribed by a doctor. Self-help support programmes use talking therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). These can help people feel more in control of their arthritis.</p>	<p>There are many different types of complementary therapy, including acupuncture, aromatherapy, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS), dietary supplements, and massage.</p>	<p>There are two main types of hip replacement surgery for osteoarthritis of the hip. The most common type is total hip replacement, which involves removing the damaged bones and inserting a new hip joint. A less common type is hip resurfacing, where the damaged surfaces of the hip joint are smoothed and covered with a metal surface.</p>

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What is the effect on pain?	Lifestyle changes, such as taking more exercise and losing weight, may help to reduce pain and increase your ability to get around. But there's not enough evidence to show this.	Physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and mobility aids can be helpful for reducing the pain of arthritis. But there's not enough evidence to show this.	Many types of medicine can lessen the pain of osteoarthritis, including paracetamol and NSAIDs. Corticosteroid injections into the joint help some people. However, medication will not work for everyone and some people have pain despite treatment. Self-help support programmes, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) may help you to manage pain better.	Some patients say that they benefit from complementary treatments, while others say that they provide no pain relief. Some studies have suggested acupuncture may help relieve the pain of hip and knee osteoarthritis.	Hip replacement or hip resurfacing usually helps reduce pain a lot, or gets rid of it altogether. Not everyone is satisfied with the results.

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What is the effect on how easily you can get around?	We don't know if lifestyle changes can improve how easily you can get around.	Around 30 in 100 people find walking and other aids help them get around more easily.	Pain medications can ease the pain of osteoarthritis which, in turn, can help you to move around more easily. Self-help support programmes may help you keep more active.	There is not enough evidence to say whether any complementary treatments help you get around more easily.	A hip replacement or hip resurfacing usually makes it much easier to get around, compared with how you were before the operation.

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What is the effect on whether your hip arthritis gets worse?	If you are overweight, losing some of this excess weight will help relieve some of the strain on your joints. This may help avoid further damage to your hip joint.	Physical therapy does not prevent your hip arthritis getting worse. Strengthening your muscles may protect the joint from damage.	Pain medications such as paracetamol, NSAIDs, corticosteroid injections, and self-help support will not stop your hip arthritis getting worse. Effective pain treatment can stop your pain from getting worse.	There is no evidence that complementary treatments can stop your hip arthritis from getting worse. There hasn't been much research in this area.	Surgery is usually for people who have severe symptoms and have tried other treatments without success. Surgery replaces the damaged joint or its surface. The new joint will age and may eventually need to be replaced. Surgery can improve the position of the joint which can relieve stress on other joints in the body.

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What side effects or complications does the treatment have?	Generally, taking enough exercise and eating a healthy diet is safe.	These are generally safe treatments with few risks. Physiotherapy can be uncomfortable and may hurt at first. This should soon ease.	NSAIDs can cause stomach bleeds. Opioid painkillers can cause constipation. Some people who take opioid painkillers for a long time become dependent on them. This means they get withdrawal symptoms when they try to stop taking them.	Complementary treatments can have side effects and may react badly with other medicines. There is a risk of infection from acupuncture.	Surgery can cause complications including blood clots, infections, bleeding, and a risk of death. There is also a chance that the surgery will not work. Your recovery may also take longer than expected due to complications, such as infection or blood clots. Sometimes patients need to have further surgery or treatment because of these complications.

What are the pros and cons of each option?

People with hip osteoarthritis have different experiences about the health problem and views on treatment. Choosing the treatment option that is best for the patient means considering how the consequences of each treatment option will affect their life.

Here are some questions people may want to consider about treatment for osteoarthritis of the hip:

- Do they find the pain from their hip intolerable?
- Do they want to be able to do more everyday things than they can at present?
- Are they willing to spend time in hospital, or having treatment?
- Are they willing to take the risk of side effects or complications from treatment?

How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

Go to <http://sdm.rightcare.nhs.uk/pda/osteoarthritis-of-the-hip/> for more detailed information about treatments for **Osteoarthritis of the Hip**. People using this type of information say they understand the health problem and treatment choices more clearly, and why one treatment is better for them than another. They also say they can talk more confidently about their reasons for liking or not liking an option with health professionals, friends and family.