

Hip Labral Tear

Hip labral tears involve the ring of soft tissue following the outside rim of the socket in the hip joint. It acts as a socket to help hold the ball at the top of the femur in place. Athletes participating in sports like soccer, football, ice hockey, ballet and golf are at an increased risk of developing the tear. If there are structural abnormalities in the hip, you are also prone to tears in the hip.

Symptoms often include pain or a catching sensation in the joint. Common treatment initially includes physical therapy and pain relievers. Using an arthroscopic technique, surgeons can get rid of any loose fragments from inside the joint and trim the tear.

Labral tears don't just happen as sports injuries though, sometimes they are degenerative and a result of years of wear and tear on the hip joint. A degenerative labral tear will often accompany osteo-arthritis of the hip and hence may require a hip replacement depending on the severity of the arthritis.

Hip Labral Tear Anatomy

The hip is a ball and socket joint connecting the thigh bone (femur) to the pelvis socket. It allows the leg to move. On the top part of the femur, there is the lesser and greater trochanters. The greater trochanter is the place where countless muscles from the buttocks allow and meet to promote hip abduction and movement from one side to the other. When it comes to the lesser trochanter, this is the point where the iliopsoas muscle is attached to the hip joint to provide for forward movement within the leg, which is otherwise referred to as hip flexion.

How to Treat a Hip Labral Tear:

1. Medication

Non-steroid anti-inflammatory medication can help to relieve pain and minimize inflammation. You can also control pain with a corticosteroid injection into the joint. Medication should only be taken for a short period of time, with therapy being used for longer term results.

2. Therapy

By going to a physical therapist, you will be taught exercises to help maximize range of movement in the hip and improve stability and strength. They will also help you to analyze movements that you perform that add stress to the hip joint and teach you what you can do to avoid these undue forces. A therapist will also help mobilise the joint and reduce the inflammation, hopefully preventing you from requiring surgery.

3. Surgery

For those who have a labral tear and have pain that last for more than four to 12 weeks even with undergoing therapy, you might have to undergo arthroscopic surgery, which involves a fiber-optic camera and tools being inserted through a small incision in the skin. Based upon the extent and cause of the tear, the surgeon might have to cut and remove the torn labrum or repair it by sewing it together again. Many individuals can return to sporting activities within four to six months following the procedure.

Tips:

- Common causes of labral tears are often from athletic trauma or repeated stress from a variety of athletic activities.
- Proper conditioning and training for muscles that are commonly used and those supporting them can help to reduce the risk of a tear.
- For those who participate in activities requiring repeated twisting movements, you are more prone to tears.
- Diseases that increase friction within the joint might put you at an increased risk for hip labral tears.
- Some individuals are born with a hip abnormality, which accelerates wear-and-tear of the joint causing a labral tear.