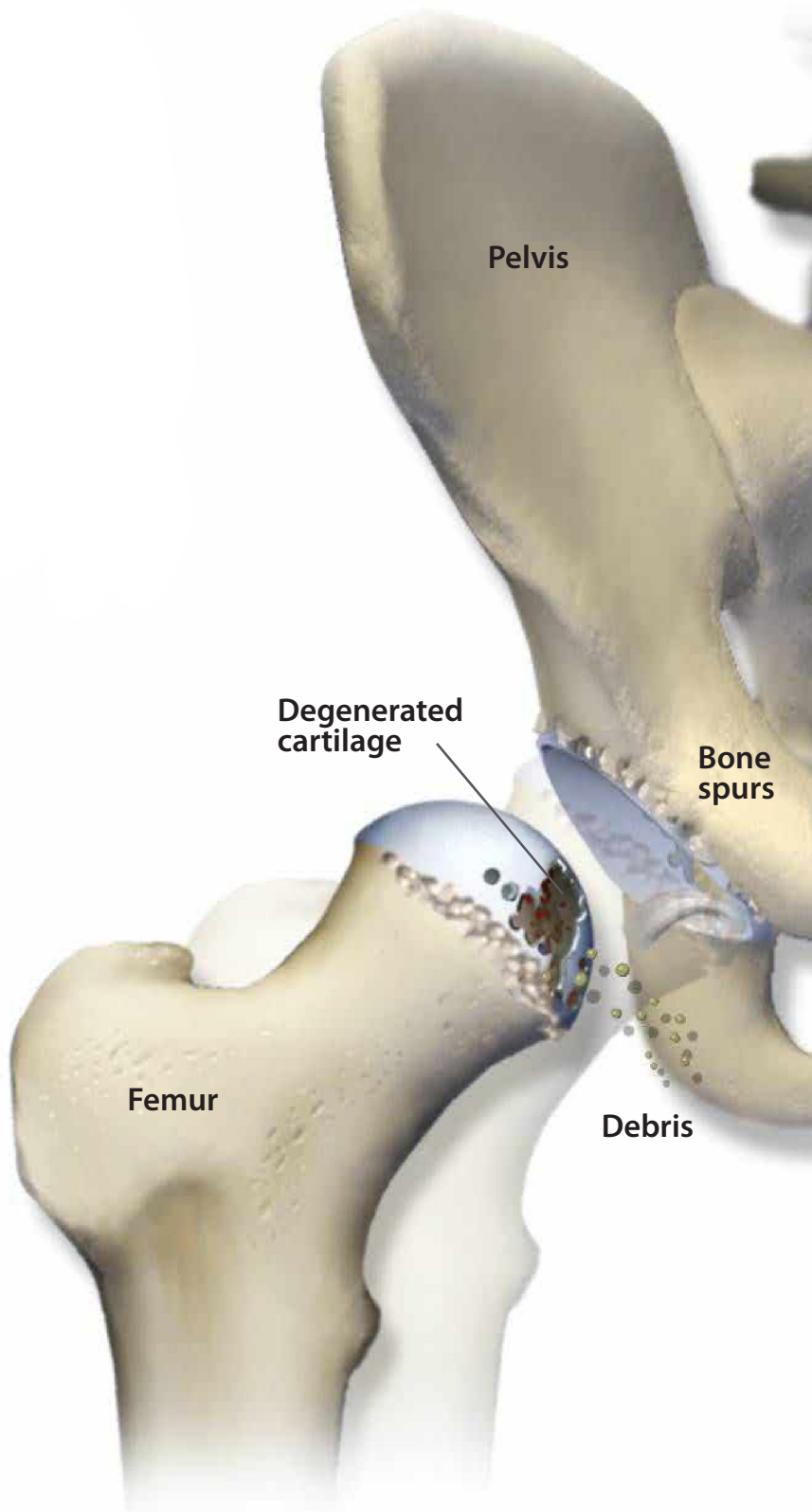


Hip Arthritis



Overview

Arthritis, also called osteoarthritis or degenerative arthritis, involves the swelling and damage of the body's joints. This condition causes pain and stiffness and limits joint movement. Because the hips are major weight-bearing joints, they are at risk for osteoarthritis.

Causes

Increased age is the strongest risk factor for osteoarthritis, but there are also other causes. Some people inherit defective cartilage, increasing their risk for the disease. Injury to the joint, such as from repetitive motions, can also lead to arthritis. And obesity forces the hip joints to carry extra weight, stressing the joints and leading to damage.

About Cartilage

Cartilage is a smooth, protective tissue that cushions the joints and allows them to move freely. Cartilage may deteriorate over time. As it loses its cushioning ability heavy use or injury may speed its deterioration. Eventually, as cartilage wears away completely, bone rubs against bone.

Bone Spur Formation

This damage promotes painful new bone growth along the edges of the joint. These lumpy areas of bone, called bone spurs, or osteophytes, develop over several years.

Symptoms

An arthritis sufferer may feel as if his hip is stiff or his leg motions are limited. Pain may be felt in the hip, inner thigh, buttocks or even in the knees. Severe arthritis may create pain at all times, even when at rest.

Treatment

In the early stages, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, cortisone injection, exercise weight loss and modification of daily activities may relieve some symptoms. If the condition becomes severe and interferes with normal activities, total replacement or hip resurfacing with metal or ceramic components may be required.