

THE RESURFACING HIP

by DOMINIC J. KLEINHENZ

Last year the Federal Food and Drug Administration (The FDA) gave permission for United States orthopedic surgeons to perform a new type of hip replacement. The FDA also required, for the first time, that surgeons receive certification for this new procedure, the Birmingham Hip Resurfacing System.

What is so new about this surgery? Why does it require added training? If you have hip arthritis, is this what you need?



Dr. Dominic J. Kleinhenz

In the traditional total hip surgery, a metal stem, embedded in the marrow of the upper end of the femur, provides a pedestal for a metal or ceramic ball to replace the arthritic head of the thigh bone (the femur). A metal hemisphere, lined with an extremely hard plastic, replaces the hip socket. The plastic liner allows free, smooth motion between the ball and socket. But, it

is this same plastic that is subject to wear under the demands of young, hard working, and often, athletic subjects. The wear particles stimulate a cellular response inside the body that attempts to isolate and eradicate these plastic particles. Sometimes, the same reaction attacks the surrounding bone. This causes the replacement to loosen.

The Birmingham hip system replaces the hip socket with a metal liner. This liner, made of a highly polished metal alloy, does not require a plastic insert. A similar sized metal head, made of the same alloy, machined to very close tolerances, substitutes for the surface of the ball. But, instead of

amputating the entire ball from the end of the femur, the surgeon reshapes the ball into a cylinder, and preserves several inches of bone which can provide the basis for future operations in case of wear or loosening. Then he cements the large metal head in place. This new hip design preserves bone and allows greater range of motion with more stability than traditional designs.

A well-informed patient who consults with a competent hip surgeon can make an informed choice when faced with the decision on how to replace his or her arthritic hip.

(Note: Dr. Kleinhenz is certified to perform surgery using the Birmingham Hip Resurfacing System)

This article has been contributed by Dr. Dominic Kleinhenz of Lighthouse Orthopedic Associates located at 1821 N.E. 25th St in Lighthouse Point, Florida. Dr. Kleinhenz is a resident of Lighthouse Point.

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