



Mini-Incision Total Hip Arthroplasty



By Frederick J. Ferlic, M.D.

South Bend Orthopaedics has a long history of experience in performing total hip arthroplasty. From 1973 until the present, total hip arthroplasty was done in a conventional manner, with a fairly lengthy incision and cutting soft tissue, especially muscle. However, the past two years, South Bend Orthopaedics has performed many mini-incision total hip arthroplasties utilizing a new innovative approach. Approximately 600 total hip arthroplasties were performed in 2006 by SBO, with a significant percentage being mini-incision.

The revolution in the care of the patient undergoing total hip arthroplasty has been truly amazing as we enter the 21st century. This is due to two factors: scientific advancement in instrumentation and prostheses, and medical care during the peri-operative period.

Both the above reasons have allowed for the mini-incision total hip arthroplasty. Mini-incision total

hip arthroplasty is defined as a total hip arthroplasty with an external incision less than 4 inches combined with internal minimal muscle splitting with minimal muscle cutting. The result of the mini-incision total hip arthroplasty is a more rapid recovery with decreased hospital stay. There is a reduction of post-operative pain and analgesic use, reduced utilization of assist devices, such as walker, crutches or cane, and earlier muscle recovery. This all combines to produce improved total hip results. Patients are now discharged same day or within one to two days, depending upon their age and concomitant medical situation. A healthy patient under 65 years of age can be home the same day or next day. A patient over 65 years of age, with or without medical problems would typically be home in one to three days. Rapid mobilization with ambulation decreases the chance for any post operative complications such as pneumonia, blood clots and other problems.

Basically mini-incision total hip arthroplasty can be categorized in three phases: 1.) Pre-operative 2) Intra-operative 3.) Post-operative. The pre-operative phase

involves evaluation by a South Bend Orthopedic surgeon and medical consultation by the family physician, internist, and hospitalist. A total hip class is attended at St. Joseph Regional Medical Center or Memorial Hospital, both of which have extensive dedicated orthopedic staff including nurses, physical therapist, occupational therapist, and social workers. A thorough explanation of the total hip experience is presented. The second, or intra-operative phase is the surgery itself. Very importantly, for quality of care, only physician and anesthesiologist are utilized at St. Joseph Regional Medical Center and Memorial Hospital. They address the technique of regional (epidural or spinal) or general anesthesia. There is a trend towards epidural anesthesia for most, but not all patients, because of decreased nausea in the recovery room, decreased intra-operative bleeding and other possible complications. Once the mini-incision total hip arthroplasty, with its muscle sparing approach has been performed, rapid recovery occurs. The patient ambulates that afternoon with a walker, one or two crutches, or a cane. Nurses, physical therapists and occupational therapists work with the

patient that day. Since St. Joseph Regional Medical Center and Memorial Hospital are major centers, ancillary consultation with neurosurgery, cardiac surgery and other specialties are always available. Discharge is when the patient ambulates safely.

The third or post-operative phase is daily increase in activity and exercise at home. Occasionally, physical therapy is necessary and is provided at South Bend Orthopaedics Physical Therapy Department, or a therapy center nearest the patient's home. South Bend Orthopaedics encourages both home and outside walking, and muscle strengthening and stretching programs. A mini-incision total hip arthroplasty allows community socialization away from the home within the first three to seven days.

In summary, the South Bend Orthopaedic surgeons along with our office and hospital teams perform the mini-incision total hip arthroplasty that allows you, the patient, to maximize his or her lifestyle in a painless, functional manner as soon as possible.



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