



What is it?

When you walk, get up from a chair or swing your leg around, do you feel or hear a "snapping" sensation in your hip? Snapping hip is usually painless and harmless, although the sensation can be annoying. Young athletes and dancers frequently experience snapping hip.

What causes it?

The snapping sensation results from the movement of a muscle or tendon (the tough, fibrous tissue that connects muscle to bone) over a bony structure. In the hip, the most common site is at the outer side where a band of connective tissue (the iliotibial band) passes over the broad, flat portion of the thighbone known as the greater trochanter (tro-KAN-ter).

Eventually, this can lead to hip bursitis. Bursitis is thickening and inflammation of the bursa, a fluid-filled sac that allows the muscle to move smoothly over bone.

What should you do?

- If your snapping hip is painless, no treatment is needed.
- If it bothers you, reduce your activity levels and apply ice.
- Stretching exercises prescribed by your physiotherapist can help.
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen, may reduce discomfort and you should discuss any medication you take with your GP or pharmacist.
- If you've developed hip bursitis, your GP or physiotherapist may recommend an injection of a corticosteroid to reduce inflammation.
- Modify your sport or exercise activities to avoid repetitive movement of the hip. For example, reduce time spent on a bicycle; swim using your arms only.
- In the very rare cases that do not respond to conservative treatment, surgery may be recommended. The type of surgery will depend on the cause of the snapping hip.

Can you prevent it?

- Avoid repetitive hip movements
- Do not "snap" the hip on purpose.
- After periods of inactivity resume activity gradually
- Maintain good flexibility and strength in the hip and pelvis

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