



BRITISH ORTHOPAEDIC ASSOCIATION



ADVICE TO PATIENTS WITH METAL ON METAL HIPS

The MHRA, which is the Regulatory Body responsible for hip replacement devices, has today issued an alert to all hospitals and doctors in the United Kingdom. The reason that they have done this is that there have been some reports of adverse reactions to the wear particles in metal-on-metal bearing artificial hips.

Metal-on-metal hips can either be total hip replacements or hip resurfacing procedures.

The incidence of this problem is low and is somewhere between one and nine patients in every thousand fitted with metal-on-metal bearings. As you know, the reason your surgeon fitted a metal-on-metal bearing was because the published results show metal bearings to have very low wear rates.

The problem that has been reported is that some patients have developed significant pain associated with damage to the soft tissues around the hip. A lot of research is being carried out in many Centres to see how and why this happens.

In the meantime, we can give the following advice:

- If you have no pain and you are being followed up, you need do nothing else. You will remain on regular follow-up.
- If you are not sure whether you have a metal-on-metal hip replacement or resurfacing, contact the hospital or surgeon where the operation was performed and they will be able to tell you. Most hip replacements in the United Kingdom are not metal-on-metal bearings.

If you have a metal-on-metal hip, then contact your hospital and they will arrange an outpatient assessment for you. It should be stressed that if you have a metal-on-metal hip and no pain, the chances of you being affected are extremely small.

If you do have pain, then the MHRA suggests that this should be investigated. Your surgeon will be able to do this and some tests may be helpful. These include a blood test to measure the cobalt and chromium ions in your blood and an MRI or an ultrasound scan may also be helpful.

All Orthopaedic Surgeons in the country have been informed of this and the British Orthopaedic Association and the British Hip Society will update surgeons and patients as more information becomes available.