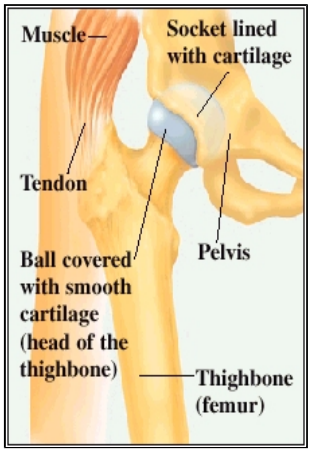
REX
UNC HEALTH CARE

83562

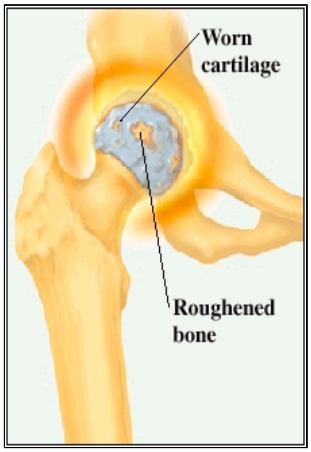
Understanding Hip Replacement

The hip joint is one of the body's largest weight-bearing joints. It is a ball-and-socket joint. This helps the hip remain stable even during twisting and extreme ranges of motion. A healthy hip joint allows you to walk, squat, and turn without pain. But when a hip joint is damaged, it is likely to hurt when you move. When a natural hip must be replaced, a prosthesis is used.



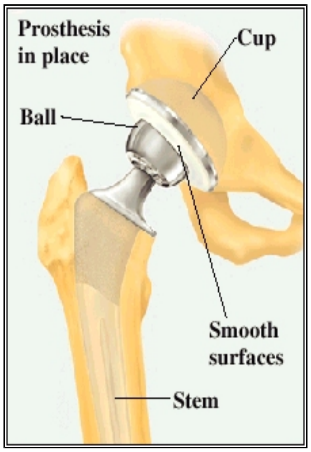
A Healthy Hip

In a healthy hip, **smooth cartilage** covers the ends of the **thighbone,** as well as the **pelvis** where it joins the thighbone. This allows the **ball** to glide easily inside the **socket.** When the surrounding **muscles** support your weight and the joint moves smoothly, you can walk painlessly.



A Problem Hip

In a problem hip, the **worn cartilage** no longer serves as a cushion. As the **roughened bones** rub together, they become irregular, with a surface like sandpaper. The ball grinds in the socket when you move your leg, causing pain and stiffness.



A Prosthesis

An artificial **ball** replaces the head of the thighbone, and an artificial **cup** replaces the worn socket. A **stem** is inserted into the bone for stability. These parts connect to create your new artificial hip. All parts have **smooth surfaces** for comfortable movement once you have healed.