THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HIP FRACTURE

What is hip fracture?
• A break near the top of the long bone running through the thigh (the femur), near the hip joint.
• Pain after hip fracture may be felt in the groin or buttock, and possibly the thigh or knee.
• Flexing or rotating the hip will cause discomfort.

What causes hip fracture?
• The fracture usually occurs after a fall or some other trauma.
• Most hip fractures occur in people older than 65 years, as aging bones become gradually weaker and more susceptible to breaks.
• Osteoporosis is the main risk factor.
• About 70% of hip fractures occur in women.

How is it treated?
• An x-ray or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is used to confirm diagnosis.
• Surgery is usually required for repair.
• The procedure is based on the location and extent of the fracture, patient age, and the surgeon’s expertise.
• In rare cases, treatment is nonsurgical. Nonsurgical treatment is usually reserved for patients who are too sick to have surgery or those who were unable to walk before the injury.

What are common complications?
• It is important to start moving around soon after surgery to speed recovery and reduce complications.
• It is usually necessary to use a walker, cane, or crutches and to participate in physical therapy for several months after surgery.
• Muscle deterioration and weakness can lead to permanent loss of mobility.
• Patients on bed rest are at increased risk for infections, bed sores, pneumonia, blood clots, and nutritional wasting.
• People who have one hip fracture are significantly more likely to have another.

How can hip fracture be prevented?
• Keep bones strong by eating a nutritious diet with adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D.
• Be physically active to help maintain bone strength.
• If you have osteoporosis, talk to your doctor about medicines that treat or prevent bone loss.
• Prevent falls by remedying household hazards like slippery floors, poor lighting, and cluttered walkways.
• Stairways should have handrails.
• Review your medicines with your doctor and take only as directed.
• Wear well-fitting, low-heeled shoes, and use walking aids correctly.

For More Information
http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00305
Information on preventing broken hips from the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons.

Information on hip fracture surgeries and on postsurgical care from the National Institutes of Health’s MedlinePLUS.

http://nihseniorhealth.gov/osteorp000168.htm
Patient information on osteoporosis from NIHSeniorHealth.