

Groin injuries may be more serious than a pulled muscle

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Some athletes are diagnosed with a pulled groin muscle when they actually might be suffering from a much more serious hip injury.

“Because the hip is located closely to the groin area, many people mistake hip injuries for groin pulls and are misdiagnosed,” said Dr. Kaare Kolstad, an orthopedic surgeon with The Methodist Hospital in Houston. “This can lead to bigger problems down the road.”

The groin muscles consist of six muscles that cover the area from the inner pelvis to the inner part of the femur (thigh bone). These muscles pull the leg together and also help with other movements of the hip joint. This is why a hip injury is sometimes mistaken for a groin pull, an injury to the inner thigh.

“It can happen with any athlete, but we see a misdiagnosis more with sports that require a lot of lateral movement like soccer, hockey and baseball,” Kolstad said. “In fact, this is the same type of thing that put New York Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez on the disabled list earlier this year.”

The two most common sports-related hip injuries are a labral tear, which can be caused by sudden stops and turns on the field and cause pain in the groin area, and a stress fracture, which are hairline cracks in the bone that can get worse over time. A hip injury brought on by athletic activity will cause deep, [persistent pain](#) that can last for weeks. The pain can get so bad that it can even hurt to sit down.

Doctors can determine from an X-ray or MRI if the problem is a groin pull or hip injury that would require either physical therapy, cortisone injections or surgery. If hip surgery is necessary, a minimally-invasive procedure is now available that will get athletes back on their feet in four to six weeks as opposed to four to five months with [open surgery](#).

“It’s important to see a physician if pain in the groin area persists for a week or two,” Kolstad said. “If we catch it early enough, we can fix the problem and get you back on your feet. The longer you wait to have the problem fixed, the higher the risk that degeneration of the hip will occur, which will eventually lead to a hip replacement.”

Provided by Methodist Hospital System

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