

He's hip to new pregnancy issue

HEALTH | Surgery for women who suffer injury during childbirth

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July 7, 2010



Nationally renowned hip arthroscopy surgeon Dr. Benjamin G. Domb is eager to share the possible prevention of a new trend in hip injuries -- the victims being new mothers. Either during childbirth or while carrying extra weight during pregnancy, they have torn the cartilage that surrounds their hip joint socket.

The 34-year-old Domb, medical director of the Hip Center of Excellence at Adventist Hinsdale Hospital, recently treated five women who suffered labrum tears during childbirth.

"The key for all women is to listen to their bodies and take preventative measures," said Dr. Benjamin Domb, who performs 400 hip surgeries a year.

"This is almost as new to me as it is to you," admits Domb. Thin women seem to be the most susceptible to the injuries.

Women who endure a labral tear typically experience pain in the groin or on the front or side of the hip, explains Domb. "Unfortunately, by the time many women finally get around to taking care of a childbirth-induced hip injury, they've already endured months of unnecessary pain," he said.

"The key for all women is to listen to their bodies and take preventative measures to avoid injuries, particularly at a time of life that demands full strength," adds Domb, who performs 400 hip surgeries a year.

Once Domb has determined a labral tear has occurred, the graduate of Princeton University and Johns Hopkins University treats the injury with hip arthroscopy, a minimally invasive procedure.

Meghan Lymangood knows all about enduring months of pain before Domb diagnosed and surgically repaired her torn labrum nearly two years ago, though her hip injury was congenital and not the result of a pregnancy or childbirth.

Lymangood said the pain in her right hip and thigh would cause her to limp for 5 to 10 minutes each morning after getting out of bed. Lymangood, who sought opinions from three other hip specialists before Domb, realizes she began compensating for her hip pain as far back as college.

Now 32 and married for six years, Lymangood is again consulting Domb because of a labral tear in her left hip -- an impingement traced to the weight she put on that hip while being on crutches for five weeks while recuperating from her right hip surgery -- and the risks involved with her hopes of a pregnancy. Lymangood's options include having arthroscopic surgery on her left hip before getting pregnant or getting pregnant and repairing the hip after her baby is born.

Domb said his wife's pregnancy heightened his sensitivity to women's issues. "We can only overcome this through education and awareness in the obstetrics community and my field," he said.

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