

# Minimally invasive total hip replacement

HealthTech guidance  
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[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/htg236](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/htg236)

# Your responsibility

This guidance represents the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, healthcare professionals are expected to take this guidance fully into account, and specifically any special arrangements relating to the introduction of new interventional procedures. The guidance does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

All problems (adverse events) related to a medicine or medical device used for treatment or in a procedure should be reported to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency using the [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to implement the guidance, in their local context, in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Nothing in this guidance should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties. Providers should ensure that governance structures are in place to review, authorise and monitor the introduction of new devices and procedures.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should [assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible](#).

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This guidance replaces IPG363, IPG112 and IPG152.

# 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 Current evidence on the safety and efficacy of minimally invasive total hip replacement appears adequate to support the use of this procedure provided that normal arrangements are in place for clinical governance, consent and audit.
- 1.2 Surgeons undertaking this procedure should have specific training in the minimally invasive technique they are using, and in use of the instrumentation it requires.
- 1.3 Patient selection should be done by surgeons and their teams who can offer both conventional and minimally invasive total hip replacement.
- 1.4 Clinicians should submit data on all patients treated using this procedure to the National Joint Registry.

## 2 The procedure

### 2.1 Indications and current treatments

- 2.1.1 Disability arising from hip pain is common and is usually caused by osteoarthritis. Conservative treatments include medication (anti-inflammatories and analgesics) and physiotherapy. If conservative treatments fail, hip resurfacing or a hip replacement may be necessary.
- 2.1.2 A traditional hip replacement involves accessing the joint through a large incision (approximately 20 cm to 30 cm in length) with division of muscles, ligaments and tendons. Several different approaches may be used.

### 2.2 Outline of the procedure

- 2.2.1 Minimally invasive total hip replacement is carried out with the patient under general or epidural anaesthesia, using an approach that aims to avoid damage to the muscles and tendons around the hip joint. A single incision of 10 cm or less in length is made. Alternatively, incisions are made at the front and back of the hip. Division of muscles may be necessary but is less extensive than in standard approaches. Specially designed retractors and customised instruments are typically used to expose the hip joint, prepare the acetabular socket and the femur, and insert the prosthesis. A specialised operating table may also be used. Fluoroscopic guidance and computer-assisted navigation tools may be used to aid positioning of the implant.
- 2.2.2 A range of different prostheses are available for this procedure, which may be cemented or uncemented.

### 2.3 Efficacy

Sections 2.3 and 2.4 describe efficacy and safety outcomes from the published literature that the Committee considered as part of the evidence about this procedure. For more

detailed information on the evidence, see the [overview](#).

2.3.1 A systematic review of 1,205 patients reported that there was no significant difference in the mean change of Harris hip score (which assesses functional ability and hip dynamics, scored from 0 to 100, higher scores better) from baseline in patients treated by mini-incision total hip replacement (n=597) compared with those treated by the standard-incision approach (weighted mean difference [WMD] 3.99; 95% confidence interval [CI] -0.18 to 8.16; p=0.06; follow-up not stated). A case series of 759 patients (1,000 hips) reported that the mean Harris hip score improved from 34 points at baseline to 92 points at a mean 37-month follow-up (significance not stated).

2.3.2 A randomised controlled trial of 219 patients treated by mini-incision or standard-incision hip replacement reported that 85% (88 out of 103) and 91% (96 out of 105) of patients respectively were able to 'mobilise' the day after the operation (p=0.54).

2.3.3 The systematic review of 1,205 patients reported that mean length of hospital stay was significantly shorter after minimally invasive procedures than after standard-incision procedures: WMD -3.59 (95% CI -5.69 to -1.50; p=0.0008).

2.3.4 The Specialist Advisers listed key efficacy outcomes as long-term functional result, length of hospital stay, requirement for analgesics, and blood loss.

## 2.4 Safety

2.4.1 Revision surgery was required in 1 patient in a case series of 400 hips at 18-month follow-up, in 2% (21 out of 1,000) of hips in the case series of 759 patients at a mean 37-month follow-up, and in 9% (8 out of 90) of hips in the case series of 70 patients at a mean 11-year follow-up.

2.4.2 The systematic review of 1,205 patients reported that the overall rate of complications was not significantly different between patients treated by minimally invasive surgery and those who had standard-incision procedures: odds ratio 1.08 (95% CI -0.59 to 1.97; p=0.81; follow-up not stated).

2.4.3 Deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism was reported in 1% (12 out of 1,000) of the hip procedures in the case series of 759 patients at a mean follow-up of 37 months.

2.4.4 The UK National Joint Registry reported rates of calcar crack (femoral crack around the insertion of the prosthesis) of less than 1% (95 out of 19,041) in patients treated by the procedure and less than 1% (1,185 out of 306,625) in patients treated by surgery using a standard approach. The rates of femoral shaft fracture were less than 1% (10 out of 19,041 and 192 out of 306,625 respectively) at follow-up of 0.1 to 6.5 years. Trochanteric fracture occurred in less than 1% (29 out of 19,041) and less than 1% (622 out of 306,625) of patients respectively.

2.4.5 The case series of 759 patients (1,000 hips) reported heterotopic ossification in 20% (198 out of 1,000) of hips at a mean follow-up of 37 months, but none of these were high grade (grade IV) or required further treatment. The case series of 70 patients (90 hips) reported osteolysis in 11% (8 out of 70) of hips that underwent radiographic assessment at a mean follow-up of 11 years.

2.4.6 The Specialist Advisers commented that malposition of components leading to dislocation, and femoral fracture are reported as adverse events. They considered theoretical adverse events to include neurovascular damage resulting from poor operative view.

## 2.5 Other comments

2.5.1 Most of the evidence presented to the Committee was on single-incision minimally invasive hip replacement. The Committee saw some evidence on minimally invasive 2-incision total hip replacement (much of it mixed with evidence on single-incision surgery). They noted that the 2-incision technique is seldom used in UK practice at present. NICE has asked the National Joint Registry to collect data on 1-incision and 2-incision minimally invasive hip replacement separately, to inform any future review of these different approaches.

# Update information

## Minor changes since publication

**January 2026:** Interventional procedures guidance 363 has been migrated to HealthTech guidance 236. The recommendations and accompanying content remain unchanged.

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## Endorsing organisation

This guidance has been endorsed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland.