

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

# Snapping Hip Syndrome



# Snapping Hip Syndrome

This is a condition that is characterised by a snapping or popping sensation and/or an audible snapping or clicking noise arising from around your hip. More often, this condition is not painful and is more an annoyance. However, some patients experience painful snapping that can lead to functional problems with the hip.

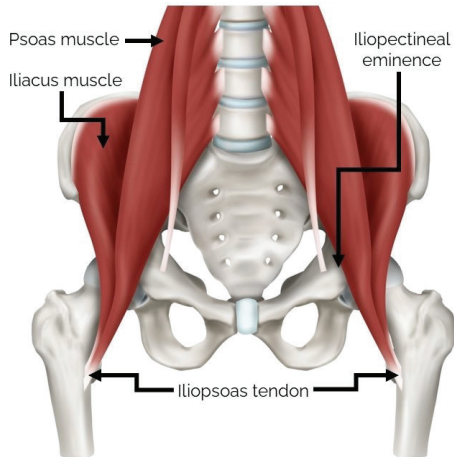


Figure 1

Front view of the pelvis demonstrating the iliopsoas muscle which begins on either side of the lower spine and pelvis. The muscle passes over the pelvis to attach to the lesser trochanter as the iliopsoas tendon.

## Causes

The snapping normally occurs when tissue(s) rub over the neighbouring prominent bone. This can occur from outside your hip joint or within your hip joint. The latter is much less common in terms of causing Snapping Hip Syndrome.

### Extra-articular (outside hip joint)

- ▣ **Iliotibial band**

This is a thick layer of tissue that runs over the outside of your hip joint and it can snap over the bony prominence of your thigh bone (greater trochanter). This, in turn, can lead to a condition called trochanteric bursitis. Please refer to leaflet on Greater Trochanteric Pain Syndrome for further information.

### ▫ Iliopsoas tendon

The iliopsoas muscle begins in front of your lower spine and spans down towards your hip, turning into a tendon that attaches to the small bony prominence on the inner side of your thigh bone (lesser trochanter). This tendon can snap against a prominence over your pelvic bone (iliopectineal eminence) when you flex your hip (Figure 1).

### Intra-articular (inside hip joint)

#### ▫ Cartilage tear

Loose debris or a tear in the cartilage within your hip joint can lead to a painful snapping or catching sensation often felt within your groin.

## Symptoms

**Snapping/popping sensation** – this can be difficult to localise but you may feel that it occurs around the outside of your hip or around your groin. It is more often a painless sensation but at times, pain may be felt.

## Diagnosis

The diagnosis of this condition is often made following a clinical assessment. Further imaging investigations in the form of x-rays, ultrasound and/or an MRI may help localise the cause of your snapping.

## Treatment

Specific treatment will depend on a number of factors including your age, your overall health and your views on the treatment options.

#### ▫ Rest and activity modification

Stop aggravating activity and consider review of sporting/exercise techniques. Warm-up with appropriate stretches.

#### ▫ Ice Packs

Apply several times daily for a period of 15 minutes each time around area of pain.

#### ▫ Anti-inflammatory medication

If oral preparations do not help, consider topical formulations to rub onto the painful area. Anti-inflammatories may have adverse side-effects if you have certain medical conditions or take certain medications so please consult with your GP prior to commencing.

- **Physiotherapy**

The aims of physiotherapy will focus on stretching and strengthening exercises on the affected muscles/tissues. For detailed description, please visit the [American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons \(AAHKS\) Home Exercise Programme](#) for [Iliotibial Band](#) or [Iliopsoas](#).

- **Cortico-steroid injections**

This involves an injection of a powerful anti-inflammatory medication but plays a limited role in treatment of snapping hip syndrome. It may be appropriate if you develop inflammation in the tissues due to where the snapping occurs.

## Outcome

Snapping hip syndrome is relatively common in young athletes and in most cases where pain is not involved, reassurance is all that is required. In cases where pain is a problem, targeted exercises can be effective.



CONSULTANT HIP & KNEE SURGEON  
BMedSci FRCS (Trauma & Orthopaedics)

📍 RIVERS HOSPITAL  
Private  
High Wych Road  
Sawbridgeworth  
CM21 0HH

☎ 01279 602718

📍 THE PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL  
NHS  
Hamstel Road  
Harlow  
CM20 1QX

☎ 01279 827060

To arrange a private consultation with Mr Kosuge:  
[Request an appointment \(online\)](#)

For further information, please visit:  
🌐 [www.denniskosuge.co.uk](http://www.denniskosuge.co.uk)

**Disclaimer** Mr Kosuge has tried very hard to keep the information in this leaflet accurate and up-to-date, but he cannot guarantee this. This information is provided as an education resource and is not intended to serve as medical advice. For full details, please visit: [www.denniskosuge.co.uk/disclaimer](http://www.denniskosuge.co.uk/disclaimer). If you are seeking orthopaedic advice, please feel free to arrange a consultation with Mr Kosuge.

© **All rights reserved.** No part of this leaflet may be reproduced or distributed in any form without prior written permission from the author, with the exception of non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.