

# Will short-term implant surgery let me continue playing tennis and golf?

**Q:** I am a 72-year old avid tennis player and golfer but the pain in my right hip is really affecting my score in both games. I consulted a hip surgeon who suggested trying a modified hip replacement using what he called a short-stem implant. But he didn't answer my question whether or not this type of hip replacement would get me back into action. What can you tell me?

**A:** Of course there's no guarantee after any surgery that everything will go exceedingly well. Surgeons are usually conservative with their recommendations after any implant surgery because studies often show a higher rate of implant failure with increased age. Return to sports participation is a challenge and a very individual process.

That's where this short-stem implant comes in. Short-stem implants are just as the name implies. The long part of the implant is to act as the "stem" fits down inside the femur (thigh bone). The surgeon reams out bone inside the femur in order to set the implant inside and stabilize the implant. With a short-stem implant, less bone is removed making it possible to consider revision surgery if it is needed.

The surgery is performed with less invasive technique. This allows for less pain, better post-operative motion, faster healing and speedier recovery. And improvements made in the implant design also makes the procedure easier. Short-stem implants are often offered to younger patients (less than 55-years-old) who are in better physical condition before surgery. They tend to heal faster, rehab sooner and recover with fewer problems or complications.

But older adults (over the age of 65) who have good bone stock may be suitable candidates for this procedure. Studies have shown results are excellent with a high degree of patient satisfaction based on return-to-sports at a level desired by the patients. With older adults in need of hip replacement who want (and expect) to stay active, the short-stem implant is likely to be recommended more often now.

Reference: Florian Schmidutz, MD, MSc, et al. Sports Activity After Short-Stem Hip Arthroplasty. In *The American Journal of Sports Medicine*. February 2012. Vol. 40. No. 2. Pp. 425-432.