

Femoroacetabular Impingement (FAI)

Femoroacetabular impingement, or FAI, occurs when the shape of the hip bones causes abnormal contact during movement. It may irritate or damage cartilage and the labrum, the firm tissue around the hip socket.

Symptoms and assessment

You may feel hip or groin pain, stiffness, or a pinch with squatting and turning. Some people have these bone shapes without pain. Your symptoms, examination, and imaging need to be considered together.

Your clinician may check hip movement and order X-rays. Other imaging can help assess the cartilage or labrum when needed.

Adjust painful activities

Temporarily reduce movements that repeatedly bring on pain, such as deep squats or forceful twisting. Do not force a painful stretch. Physical therapy may help improve strength and movement control. Discuss suitable pain relief with your clinician.

If symptoms continue despite nonsurgical treatment, a specialist can explain whether surgery is appropriate. The decision depends on your joint findings and goals.

When pain needs urgent care

Severe hip pain after a fall or an inability to bear weight needs emergency assessment. New severe pain with a hot, swollen hip or fever also needs urgent medical care.

Related reading

- Greater Trochanteric Pain Syndrome
- Hip Fractures

Sources and further information

- AAOS: Femoroacetabular impingement
- NHS: Broken hip

This handout provides general education. Your treating clinician can explain how it applies to your injury.