

The New York Times recently reported that a type of hip implant once widely used in as many as 80,000 out of the estimated 250,000 hip replacement and resurfacing procedures performed in the U.S. annually may cause complications for patients. The hip components, referred to as metal on metal devices, were once favored by many orthopedic surgeons who believed the all metal components were more durable than their counterparts that are produced with some plastic parts. Recent cases have demonstrated that may not be the case, and that these devices may actually fail in as little as one to two years. Generally, it is expected that hip implants should last as long as 15 years.

In addition to unexpectedly early replacement of the device, deterioration of the devices may lead to high deposits of unwanted metals such as chromium and cobalt. These metals may cause tissue reactions and be associated with groin pain, inflammation, and tissue and bone loss. While causes of early replacement of an artificial hip joint is far more likely to be from dislocation than metallic debris, when metal particles are the culprit, the procedures to replace the devices can be far more complex and can leave some patients with lasting complications.

According to the [NY Times article](#), all components, regardless of material, create debris from wear and tear, but the concern is the large volume of microscopic metal particles that may be deposited with the deterioration of some metal on metal products. Regardless, manufacturers do not readily agree that there is a problem with the all metal devices. Nevertheless some surgeons are scaling back their use of them as they await further study. Individuals experiencing complications from their hip replacements may wish to consult their surgeons about the type of hip device used in their replacement surgery.