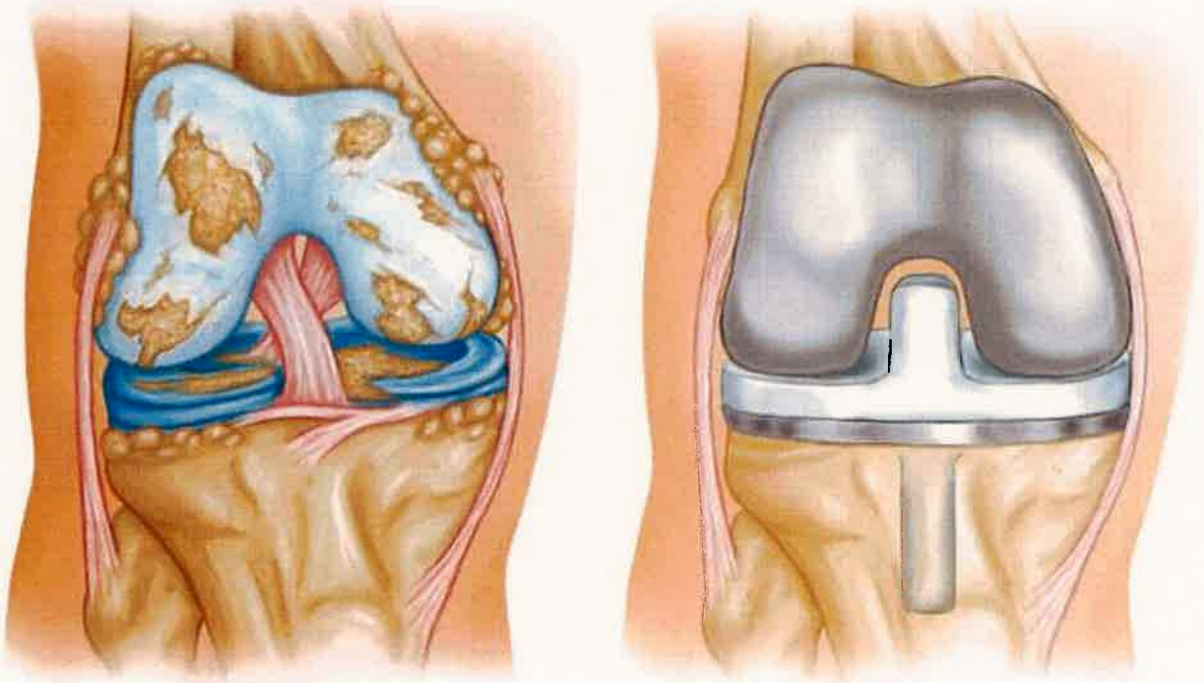


The Guide to your Total Knee Replacement (Arthroplasty)



Knee replacement surgery, also known as arthroplasty, is a common procedure used to replace the damaged parts of the knee joint with artificial components. This procedure is often recommended to those suffering from severe arthritis or a significant knee injury that hinders their daily activities and affects their quality of life. Knee replacement surgery aims to restore function, relieve pain, and improve mobility in the affected knee.

The knee joint is one of the largest and most complex joints in the body, bearing a significant amount of our body weight. It consists of the lower end of the thigh bone (femur), the upper end of the shin bone (tibia), and the kneecap (patella). When any of these components become damaged due to injury or disease, knee replacement surgery may be a viable treatment option.

Knee replacement surgery has been performed for over four decades and has proven to be a safe and effective treatment for knee pain and dysfunction. With advancements in surgical techniques and the development of modern, high-quality prosthetic components, the success rate of knee replacement surgery has significantly increased over the years.

When Do You Need a Total Knee Replacement Surgery?

Knee replacement surgery is typically recommended when conservative treatments such as physical therapy, pain medications, and lifestyle modifications are no longer effective in managing the symptoms. There are several conditions and circumstances where knee replacement surgery may be considered.

Osteoarthritis is the most common reason for knee replacement surgery. This degenerative joint disease causes the cartilage that cushions the bones in the knee joint to wear away, leading to bone-on-bone contact and resulting in pain, swelling, stiffness, and reduced mobility.

Rheumatoid arthritis, a chronic inflammatory disorder that affects the lining of the joints, can also lead to severe knee damage requiring replacement surgery. In addition, traumatic injuries, such as fractures or ligament tears, can cause significant knee damage that may necessitate a knee replacement.

Lastly, certain bone diseases and deformities can lead to knee damage that can only be corrected with knee replacement surgery. Regardless of the cause, the decision to undergo knee replacement surgery should be made after careful consultation with an orthopaedic surgeon who can evaluate the condition of your knee and discuss the potential risks and benefits of the procedure.

Preparing for A Knee Replacement Surgery

The preparation for a knee replacement surgery involves several steps, including medical evaluations, pre-surgical exercises, and lifestyle adjustments. The preparation begins with a thorough medical evaluation to assess your overall health and identify any potential risks that could affect the surgery or recovery. These evaluations may include blood tests, X-rays, and other diagnostic tests.

Pre-surgical exercises are also important as they can help strengthen the muscles around the knee and improve your range of motion, which can aid in the recovery process. Physical therapists can provide a customized exercise program based on your specific needs and abilities.

Lifestyle adjustments, such as maintaining a healthy weight and quitting smoking, are also crucial in the preparation for knee replacement surgery. Excessive body weight can put additional strain on the new knee joint, while smoking can delay healing and increase the risk of complications.

The Knee Replacement Surgery Procedure Explained

Knee replacement surgery is a major procedure that involves the removal of the damaged parts of the knee joint and the implantation of a prosthetic joint. The surgery is performed under general or spinal anesthesia and typically takes between one to three hours.

The surgeon begins by making an incision over the knee to expose the joint. The damaged ends of the femur and tibia are then carefully removed, and the remaining bone surfaces are shaped to fit the prosthetic components. The prosthetic joint, which is made from metal and high-grade plastic, is then implanted and secured using a special bone cement.

The surgeon then checks the alignment and function of the new joint before closing the incision.

Risks and Complications of Knee Replacement Surgery

Like any major surgery, knee replacement surgery carries certain risks and potential complications. Common risks include infection, blood clots, nerve damage, and complications from anesthesia. There's also a risk of complications related to the prosthetic joint, such as loosening, instability, and wear and tear over time.

While these complications are relatively rare, it's important to be aware of them and discuss them with your surgeon before deciding to undergo the procedure. Your surgeon can provide strategies to minimize these risks, such as prophylactic antibiotics to prevent infection and blood thinners to reduce the risk of clot formation.

What to Expect After Surgery?

The recovery from knee replacement surgery can be lengthy and requires patience and commitment to rehabilitation. Immediately after the surgery, you will be encouraged to move your foot and ankle to promote blood flow and prevent blood clots. You will also likely start physical therapy within a day or two to begin regaining strength and mobility in



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Pain and swelling are common after surgery, but these symptoms can be managed with medications and ice therapy. Most patients are able to walk with the aid of a walker or crutches within a few days after the surgery.

The full recovery from knee replacement surgery can take several months and involves a progressive physical therapy program to restore the knee's strength, flexibility, and function. Following your surgeon's instructions and adhering to your physical therapy regimen is important to ensure the best possible outcome.

Additional Information to be aware of:

- After joint replacement you will be required to take an antibiotic prior to all dental procedures.
- It is NOT recommended to have any dental procedures until you are 90 days post op. Once you are 90 days postop and you have a dental appointment, please call this office and we will send the antibiotic to your pharmacy.
- You should NOT submerge your surgical site in any form of water for at least 6 weeks from surgery. This would include pools, oceans and hot tubs. Your incision should be completely healed and all scabs gone before doing so. Showering is acceptable. Running water over the incision is fine. Putting your incision underwater increases your risk of infection.
- We do NOT suggest taking any long trips via airplane or car until you are 6 weeks post op. Failing to do so increases your chances of a blood clot or pulmonary embolism.
- Home health will be ordered for you for the first 2 weeks after surgery. If your insurance allows, and we find a vendor who accepts your insurance, a nurse will visit 1-2 times a week to change bandages, and a physical therapist will come 1-2 times as well to assist you with your exercises. You will be expected to do the exercise on your own on the days the therapist is no longer coming to the home.