

here is your guide to

Total Knee Replacement



Advanced science
for real living.™

Total Knee Replacement

Total knee replacement involves removing the diseased cartilage and resurfacing it with orthopedic implants. During surgery, the joint is exposed by an incision, made down the center or off to the side of the knee. The damaged bone ends are then resurfaced with components designed to re-create the natural contours of the bones in a healthy knee. The metal and polyethylene (plastic) implants allow the bones to smoothly glide against each other, much like natural cartilage.

Total knee replacement is performed while you are under anesthesia, which your physician will explain to you before surgery.



The length of surgery will be approximately 1 1/2 - 2 hours. Preoperative care and time spent in the recovery room can add an additional 2-3 hours before you are back in your hospital room.

Complications

While uncommon, complications can occur during and after surgery. Some complications include infection, blood clots, implant breakage, mal-alignment, and premature wear. Although implant surgery is extremely successful in most cases, some patients still experience stiffness



Healthy Knee



Arthritic Knee

and pain. No implant will last forever and factors such as the patient's post-surgical activities and weight can affect longevity. Be sure to discuss these and other risks with your surgeon.

There are many things that your surgeon may do to minimize the potential for complications. Your surgeon may have you see a medical physician before surgery to obtain tests. You may also need to have your dental work up to date and may also be shown how to prepare your home to avoid falls.

After Surgery

After surgery, you will receive pain medication and begin physical therapy. It is important to start moving your new knee as soon as possible after surgery to promote blood flow, to regain knee motion, and to facilitate the recovery process. You may also be out of bed and walking with crutches or a walker within 24 hours of your surgery.

You will be shown how to safely climb and descend stairs, how to get into and out of a seated position, and how to care for your knee once you return home. It is a good idea to enlist the help of friends or family to help you once you do return home.

Before you leave the hospital, your therapist will show you a variety of exercises designed to help you regain mobility and strength in your knee. You should be able to perform these exercises at home.

Most people are ready to go home between 3–5 days after surgery; however, some people may go to a separate rehabilitation facility, which your surgeon should discuss with you before surgery. Many will go directly home and begin supervised therapy either at home or as an outpatient. When at home, it is important to continue with your exercises as your physician has instructed.

What type of rehabilitation can I expect following surgery?

Exercise is necessary for proper healing. Your surgeon may recommend therapy to assist with gentle leg movement, strengthening, and mobility exercises between 24–48 hours after surgery. Therapy will begin in the hospital and usually continues after discharge for approximately six weeks.

What activity range can be expected after this surgical procedure?

Diligent physical therapy, proper diet, and a willingness to follow all of your physician's recommendations will contribute to a more successful recovery after surgery. Most patients are able to walk without support and drive 3 – 6 weeks after surgery. Activities such as golf, doubles tennis, and swimming can usually be resumed but only after a thorough evaluation by your physician. Always follow your physician's recommendations as recovery time will vary for each patient.

You will typically not be allowed to participate in high-impact activities or contact sports. These types of activities place extreme amounts of pressure on the joints, which could lead to complications. Ask your surgeon which activities you should avoid after surgery.

Will I need to see my surgeon after surgery?

Your surgeon will set a follow-up schedule for the first year after surgery to evaluate your progress. You will be seen every year or two thereafter. Complications can occur with implants, so seeing your surgeon when you notice a change in symptoms can assist in evaluating any changes that may occur with your new joint.

Summary

We know the decision to have surgery is sometimes difficult. We hope this brochure has helped you understand some of the basics of total knee replacement surgery so that you can make the best decision for yourself. Millions of others have made this choice, allowing them to return to more active lifestyles. This brochure is not intended to replace the experience and counsel of your orthopedic surgeon. If you have any further questions, please speak with your orthopedic surgeon. If you do not have an orthopaedic surgeon, please refer to the doctor listings provided in this brochure.