

The
**Anderson
Orthopaedic
Institute**

A Center of Excellence
for Orthopaedics



Knee Replacement

PATIENT INFORMATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Types of Knee Replacements	1
Total Knee Replacement.....	2
Robotic Knee Replacement.....	2
Partial Knee Replacement.....	2
Revision Total Knee Replacement.....	2
Possible Complications.....	3
Preparing for a Knee Replacement	4
Your Joint Replacement Team.....	4
Scheduling Surgery.....	4
Preoperative Planning.....	4
Discharge Planning.....	4
Blood Donations and Iron Supplements.....	4
Medical Clearance.....	4
Reducing the Risk of Infection.....	5
Stopping Medications Before Surgery.....	5
Financial Arrangements.....	5
Physical Therapy.....	5
Preoperative Exercises.....	6
Day of Surgery	7
Reporting to the Hospital or Surgery Center.....	7
Clothing.....	7
Anesthesia.....	7
Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU).....	8
Family Waiting Area.....	8
Postoperative Course	9
Pain Medicine.....	9
Wound Care.....	9
Rehabilitation: Regaining Control Through Exercise	10
Your Rehab Team.....	10
Postoperative Physical Therapy.....	10
Discharge Information	11
Final Discharge Instructions/Prescriptions.....	11
Written Discharge Instructions.....	11
Going Home – By Car/By Airplane.....	11
Getting into Your House/Using Stairs at Home.....	11
Returning for your first Postoperative Visit	11

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd.)

Long-Term Considerations	12
Use of Antibiotics to Prevent Knee Infections	12
Follow-up Visits.....	12
Ongoing Resources	12
<i>Anderson Orthopaedic Research Institute</i>	12
<i>The “Joint Journal” Newsletter</i>	12
Frequently Asked Questions	13

Anderson Orthopaedic Clinic

Arlington

2800 Shirlington Road, 11th Floor
Arlington, Virginia 22206

Mount Vernon

2501 Parker’s Lane, Suite 200
Alexandria, Virginia 22306

Lorton

10716 Richmond Highway, Suite 101
Lorton, Virginia 22079

Fairfax

3299 Woodburn Road, Suite 480
Fairfax, Virginia 22003

Reston

1850 Centennial Park Drive, Suite 500
Reston, VA 20191

Website: www.andersonclinic.com

Phone: 703-619-4400

INTRODUCTION



A typical total knee implant covers all parts of the knee joint that contact each other as the knee bends.

Over the past 40 years, our highly specialized surgeons at The Anderson Orthopaedic Clinic have performed more than 35,000 joint replacements. Our long-term experience has allowed us to prepare this book, which will help you familiarize yourself with the knee replacement procedures performed at Anderson Clinic.

In this booklet, we will explain the steps you will take to prepare for surgery, what will occur on the day of your surgery, and what you can expect during your postoperative recovery period. We also describe your home care after surgery. Once you and your physician have decided that a knee replacement surgery is needed, you will naturally have many questions.

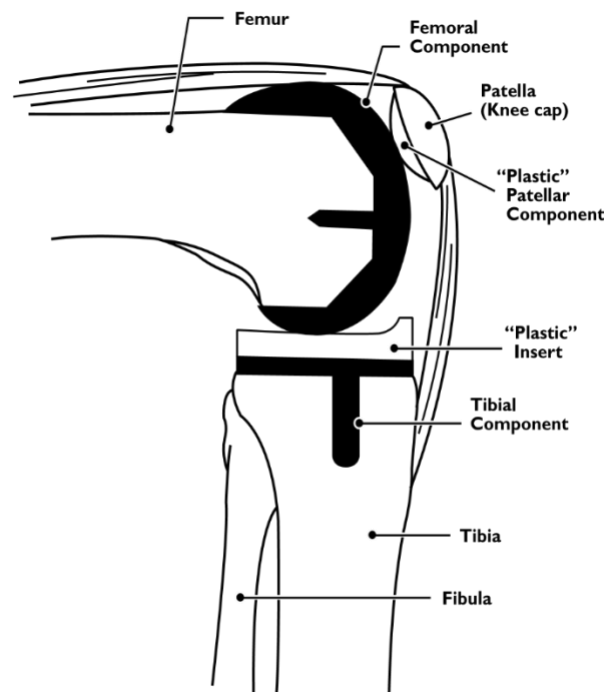
Experience has taught us that each patient has different expectations. It is important to us that all our patients know what to expect preceding and following surgery.

TYPES OF KNEE REPLACEMENTS

Total Knee Replacement

Patients frequently ask, “*What exactly is a total knee replacement?*” The simplest answer is that it is a resurfacing of the worn and arthritic surfaces of the knee joint. We often tell our patients that a *total knee replacement* is similar to laying down new carpet in the home.

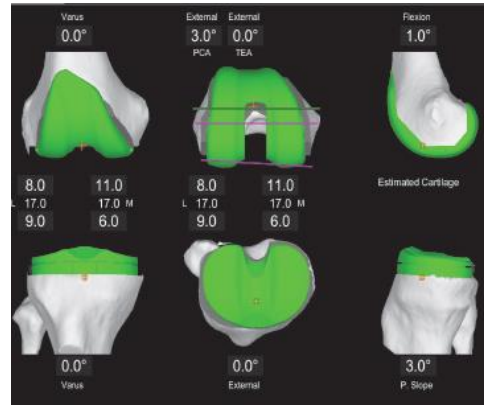
With arthritis, the cartilage covering the surfaces of the bone within the knee joint is badly worn. In a knee replacement, the damaged cartilage, along with a very small amount of bone, is removed with precise guides and instruments. The knee replacement implant, which is made of metal and plastic, is then fitted to the bone. This provides an artificial gliding surface that eliminates joint pain.



Side view of knee with total knee components.

Robotic-Assisted Knee Replacement

Robotic-assisted knee replacements create individualized plans for surgery that allow the surgeon to accurately and consistently restore each patient's unique anatomy, alignment, and ligament balance. Robotic surgery carries unique advantages and complications. Talk to your surgeon about the specific benefits of traditional versus robotic techniques for your surgery. Given the relatively recent adoption of robotic surgery in joint replacements, we are continuously performing new research to investigate the outcomes of these evolving technologies.



Partial Knee Replacement

Surgeons at the Anderson Clinic are at the forefront of research and development of *unicompartmental, (partial), knee replacements*. This procedure greatly benefits patients who have localized arthritis (one location). In this procedure, only one of the three compartments within your knee is replaced: medial (inside), lateral (outside) or under the kneecap. We do not recommend this surgery for mild problems; rather, we suggest it to patients whose pain persists after conservative treatment.

Partial knee replacements have been performed at the Anderson Clinic for over 35 years. Because the surgery is less extensive and healthy portions of the knee are maintained, the procedure is safer and less painful. Thus, the recovery period is often shorter compared to a total knee replacement. Most patients can go home the day of surgery.

A potential benefit of minimally invasive partial knee surgery, especially for today's active patients, is the ease with which it can be changed to a complete replacement if the first replacement wears out. In most instances, the revision of a unicompartmental surgery is straightforward and yields very good results.

Although we can be 90% sure before an operation that a partial knee replacement is best for a patient, we make the final decision between a partial or total knee replacement during surgery. We only will opt to perform a total knee replacement if the patient's arthritis proves to be so severe that a total knee replacement is necessary to improve knee function and relieve pain.

Revision Total Knee Replacement

Approximately 1 in every 100 total knee implants will fail each year, requiring a revision of the prosthesis. Since a revision is performed to replace failed knee implants, a revision is more complex and often requires an implant specially designed for a knee replacement that has failed. When the procedure includes removing cement or repairing damaged bone, the operation takes longer, and a patient's recovery time will likely be longer than for the first-time knee replacement. The bone is not as strong when an implant is removed, and the ligaments supporting the knee may also be damaged. A revision prosthesis can help address these problems.

Your surgeon or his assistants will be glad to answer your questions about revision surgery and will review the advantages and disadvantages of different techniques with you.

Possible Complications

Along with the advantages of knee replacement, the possibilities of complications exist. Complications may include infection, nerve palsies, blood-clot formation, knee instability, tendon injuries, implant loosening/failure, injuries to blood vessels, or fracture. By discussing these potential issues openly, we hope you will have more confidence in our expertise and ability to avoid complications.

Infection occurs in less than 0.5% of first-time knee replacements at our institution. If the infection is diagnosed quickly, a thorough cleaning of the knee with a course of antibiotics may be all that is necessary to cure the infection. If this develops into a chronic infection, then additional surgeries will be required to control the disease process. Patient risk factors for developing a joint infection include morbid obesity, diabetes, malnutrition, smoking, anemia, and colonization with MRSA. In an effort to decrease your risk for infection, your surgeon may provide recommendations for optimizing your health prior to undergoing a joint replacement.

Tendon injuries during or immediately following surgery are rare but may cause instability of the knee replacement. These injuries are often amenable to bracing and therapy. In rare cases, instability may result in the need for a revision surgery.

Less than 1% of primary and revision patients have peroneal or femoral nerve injuries, and most individuals with such injuries recover with time.

Fractures occur during surgery in less than 0.5% of patients. In almost all of these cases, the fractures consist of very small cracks in the bone. These heal rapidly and do not interfere with the patient's normal recovery from joint replacement. If the fracture is large, it may require operative treatment and restricted weight bearing for a longer period than a standard, uncomplicated knee replacement.

A deep venous thrombosis (a blood clot in the leg) is rare but may also occur. These are rarely life threatening, but are taken seriously when they occur. To avoid this complication, we treat patients with aspirin 81mg twice daily and/or pneumatic compression devices.

Risks from anesthesia also exist and vary for different patients and types of anesthesia. We encourage patients to discuss their options with the anesthesiologist on the day of surgery.

We believe well-informed patients approach the surgical procedure and postoperative experience with greater enthusiasm and less apprehension. By discussing your procedure, its risks and benefits, as well as our techniques, alternative treatments, and expected outcomes, we hope to reassure you that we are committed to your well-being.

PREPARING FOR A KNEE REPLACEMENT

Your Joint Replacement Team

A team of professionals will help you through all phases of your surgery. This team includes your surgeon and their clinical staff, physical therapist, case manager, physician assistant, nurse and support personnel. Other important members of our Joint Replacement Team include our four orthopaedic Fellows. Having completed their orthopaedic training, these surgeons have dedicated a year to further professional development in total joint replacements with the Anderson Clinic. They are among the brightest young orthopaedic surgeons in the country. You may meet one of these doctors on your visits to our office. Under the supervision of Anderson Clinic Physicians, each Fellow assists in the clinic and in surgery, provides postoperative patient care with daily rounds, and participates in our research.

Scheduling Surgery

If you do not schedule surgery at the time of your office visit, our scheduling secretary (the person who will help you select a surgery date) is available to answer any questions. To allow adequate time for the necessary preparations, a surgery date is usually set well in advance of your decision to proceed with knee replacement surgery. You will initially get a date for surgery, but the time of your surgery will not be determined until the 1-2 days before the surgery date.

Preoperative Planning

Once you have a surgery date, you will need to prepare for surgery. This includes preoperative interviews and tests which will need to be completed within thirty days prior to your surgery date. We encourage all of our patients to have a designated "coach" or advocate. Your "coach" is the main person that will help you complete the required tasks before surgery and be there to support you after surgery.

Discharge Planning

Most patients recuperate much better at home with the help of family and friends; therefore, our care plan promotes discharge to your home. Your team will assist in identifying the kind of help you may need after discharge and advise you of care options. It is important that your discharge plan be worked out with the team before surgery.

Blood Donations and Iron Supplements

We no longer advise patients to donate their own blood before surgery. With less invasive surgery techniques, there is less than a 1% chance you will need to be transfused. Patients with anemia (Hemoglobin < 12.5 g/dL) may be recommended to take an iron supplement prior to surgery in an effort to reduce their risk for a transfusion.

Medical Clearance

All patients must be evaluated by a medical doctor prior to surgery to determine if it is safe to proceed. This visit will include a medical history, physical examination, and basic laboratory tests. You may also need a chest x-ray and electrocardiogram that has been completed within the past year. Additional tests may be required if you have other specific medical problems. The examination must be completed within 30 days prior to your surgery.

Reducing the Risk of Infection

Any source of bacteria within your system must be eliminated before your surgery. Abscessed teeth and pending dental work should be taken care of prior to your surgery. A urinary tract infection is an additional source of contamination. If an infection is found, antibiotic treatment may be required prior to your operation.

Our goal is to reduce the number of bacteria you carry on your skin prior to surgery. We will instruct you to use an antibacterial wash in the days prior to surgery. Because certain bacteria are carried in your nostrils, we may instruct you to use an ointment to treat these bacteria. Furthermore, the skin around your operative extremity should be free of any open lesions such as cuts, scrapes, bug bites, etc. If you have any questions, please call your physician's office.

Stopping Medications Before Surgery

If you are taking blood thinners, such as Plavix, Coumadin, Eliquis, or Pradaxa, these also can create bleeding problems. It is important to discuss their use with the prescribing physician to determine the dosage program that will best prepare you for surgery.

Ten days prior to the surgery, you should also discontinue the use of most herbs/supplements, such as echinacea, ephedra, feverfew, garlic, ginger, ginkgo biloba, ginseng, goldenseal, kava, saw palmetto, St. John's Wort, valerian, vitamin E, glucosamine chondroitin, and fish oil.

You should stop taking any other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines 10 days before surgery to avoid increased bleeding associated with these medications.

We will often prescribe celecoxib, meloxicam, or etodolac prior to surgery. You may take these medications in addition to Tylenol for pain until the morning of surgery.

Financial Arrangements

The Anderson Orthopaedic Clinic accepts multiple insurance plans and cash. Patients hoping to pay for their care through a cash-plan should contact our office directly to discuss the available payment options. The Anderson Orthopaedic Clinic will make every effort to assist you in meeting the policy requirements of your insurance company. You need to determine whether your insurance requires pre-authorization for surgery and if a second opinion is required. A call to your insurance carrier will answer these issues, if they are not clearly stated in your policy.

We accept a number of health care plans with fixed fee schedules. The Anderson Orthopaedic Clinic will bill Medicare or your commercial insurance for the cost of the surgery. You as a patient are responsible for the balance stipulated by your type of insurance. The Anderson Orthopaedic Clinic will also bill you for the services of the Fellow who assists during surgery, throughout your hospital stay, and with your follow-up care. The Anderson Clinic billing office and our staff are available to assist you with questions about reimbursement and billing procedures. Your hospital or surgery center bills are handled by the individual facility's billing offices. If you are responsible for a deductible associated with the surgery, you will be responsible for paying this prior to the date of surgery.

Physical Therapy

Because of the many months of pain and decreased physical activity you may have experienced before surgery, your muscles may not be in the best condition. We have found that patients potentially do better after surgery if they do exercises before.

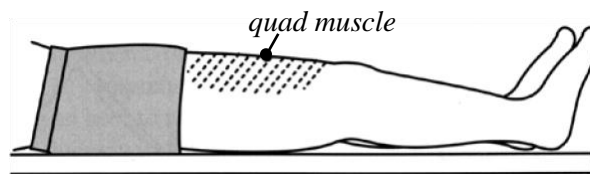
Preoperative Exercises

Many of the preoperative exercises are the same exercises that will be part of your postoperative therapy program. We recommend you work on the following exercises several times throughout the day. If necessary, start out gradually and build up the number of repetitions. If you are unable to tolerate any of the exercises due to pain, DO NOT continue.

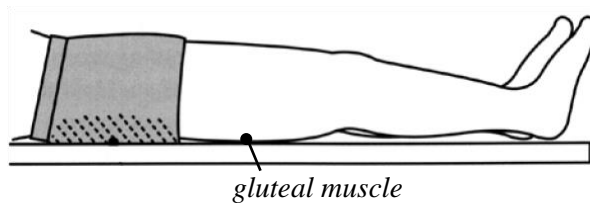
- 1. Ankle Pumps:** Move your foot up and down. Repeat up to 25 repetitions, twice daily.



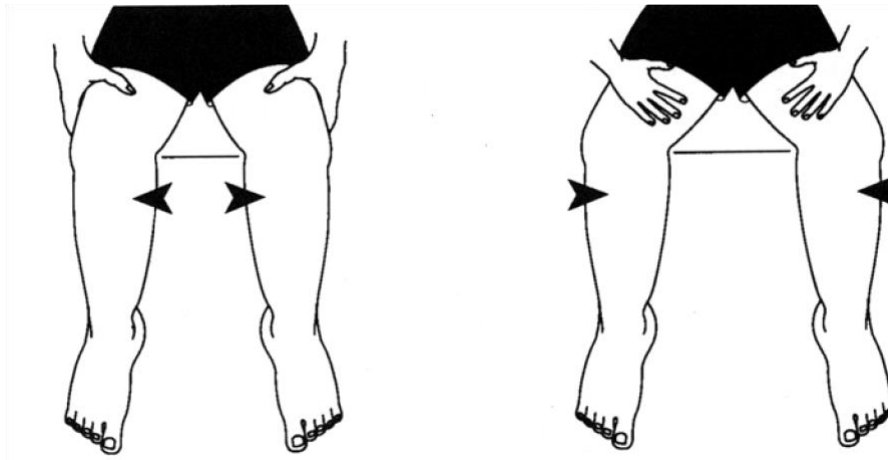
- 2. Quad Sets/Knee Tighteners:** Lying on your back with your legs straight, push down the back of the knee against the bed. Maintain the muscle contraction in the thigh for five seconds. Relax. Repeat up to 25 repetitions, twice daily.



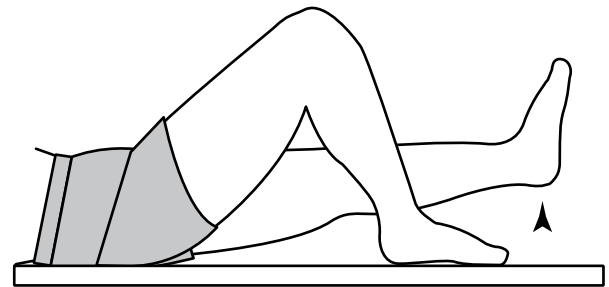
- 3. Gluteal Sets/Buttock Tighteners:** This exercise can be done lying down, sitting, or standing. Squeeze the buttock muscles together and hold for five seconds. Relax. Repeat up to 25 repetitions, twice daily.



4. **Isometric Adduction/Abduction:** Sitting in a chair, place your hands along the outside of your thighs. Tensing your thighs, pretend as if you are trying to push your thighs apart; maintain the tension for 5 seconds. Then, place your hands on the inside of your thighs and pretend you are pushing your thighs together by tensing them for 5 seconds. You should be exerting your thigh muscles, not your hands or arms. Repeat up to 25 repetitions, twice daily.



5. **Straight Leg Raise:** Lie on your back with your right leg bent. Tighten your left knee and thigh and lift your left leg off the bed. Hold for the count of three. Repeat the exercise using your right leg. Repeat up to 10 repetitions, twice daily. Do not perform this exercise if it causes you pain. Tighten your left knee and thigh and lift your left leg off the bed. Hold for the count of three. Do the same exercise with the opposite leg. Repeat the exercise using your right leg. Repeat up to 10 repetitions, twice daily. Do not perform this exercise if it causes you pain.



6. **Chair Push-Ups:** Sitting in a chair with arm rests, push yourself up using your arms. Begin by using your feet to assist you, then progress to putting more weight onto your arms to lift yourself. Hold three seconds. Repeat up to 10 repetitions, twice daily.

DAY OF SURGERY

Reporting to the Surgery Center or Hospital

On the day of surgery, you will report to the Registration Desk. Bring your photo ID and Insurance Cards for verification. You will be escorted to an area where you will change into a hospital gown. An identification bracelet will be placed on your wrist. An admissions nurse will make sure that your medical work-up has been completed. You will then be escorted to an area where a nurse will make you comfortable and provide warm blankets. An intravenous line will be started. You will see your surgeon and the anesthesiologist before going into the operating room.

Clothing

Patient gowns are suggested during the day of surgery. You are encouraged to bring loose fitting jogging clothes, t-shirts, pajamas, sweatpants, or shorts for the rest of your stay, so that you will be more comfortable when you are walking around. Tennis shoes, loafers, or comfortable support shoes should be worn; we do not recommend bringing new shoes.

Anesthesia

On the day of surgery, you will meet with the anesthesiologist and anesthesia staff (nurse anesthetist) to go over your medical history and the type of anesthesia that will be utilized for the surgery. Most patient will receive spinal or epidural anesthesia and will also be given medication that allows them to sleep during the procedure. This avoids the use of a breathing tube during the operation. However, there are some situations in which may dictate general anesthesia be utilized, and the anesthesiologist will discuss any such situation with you.

Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)

A typical replacement operation takes approximately one and one-half hours. Revision surgery often takes longer because it is more complex. After surgery, you will be moved from the operating room to the PACU, often referred to as the recovery room. Here, the nurses will monitor your vital signs and oversee your recovery from anesthesia. Your stay in the PACU lasts at least 1-2 hours. You may receive oxygen through nasal breathing tubes. Pneumatic compression boots are also placed on both feet to help improve circulation and help prevent blood clot formation.

Family Waiting Area

Family members are usually not permitted to visit with patients in the PACU. At the end of the surgery, the surgeon or the Fellow will discuss the details of the procedure with your family members. If family members leave the waiting area, they should let the staff know where they will be. If members of your family are unable to be present on the day of surgery and would like to talk with your surgeon, they should leave a phone number where they can be reached.

POSTOPERATIVE COURSE

Force Therapeutics

During your recovery, you will utilize our digital care platform named Force Therapeutics. This electronic platform provides education materials, patient monitoring, communication with our staff, focused physical therapy, and guides you through your recovery pathway. Our patients have Force this to be an invaluable resource that has enhanced their overall joint replacement experience.

Pain Management Regimen – Handout From Clinic Visit

We recognize that post surgery pain is a significant source of fear for patients. Adequate pain control is very important to us. We have designed a comprehensive program to improve your experience by decreasing pain with a “multimodal” pain program. This process starts before surgery, using a combination of different medications that work together to reduce the number of narcotic medications you require and to maximize your pain control. The narcotic medications can cause side effects such as nausea, itching and constipation, which we would like to avoid.

Elevation and Icing

The best way to control pain and swelling after surgery is through elevation and icing. The surgical leg should be elevated with cold therapy placed on the surgical site for at least 30-40 minutes every waking hour. When elevating, the ankle should be above the level of the hip as it relates to the food. When utilizing ice-therapy (ice machine, sleeve, or packs), it is important to avoid direct contact of ice with your skin.

Wound Care

Your incision will be covered by a water-resistant dressing after surgery. This dressing should be removed after 7 days. If there is no active drainage from the wound, you may shower with this dressing in place once you get home. After the dressing is removed, it is not recommended to apply any cream, ointment or lotion to the wound unless specific instructions are given by your surgeon. Most of the time, your stitches will be under the skin and will dissolve on their own. If you have staples they can be removed 14 days after surgery as long as there is no drainage.

If the wound is draining, the dressing should be changed once it becomes saturated. The wound should be dry and without drainage by about 7 days postoperative. If there is persistent drainage from the wound after this time, you should call our office. If there is worsening redness around the incision, you should also call the office.

Other common concerns after knee replacement surgery include swelling and bruising. These can be quite significant in nature and can appear anywhere from the thigh to the toes. These are typically worse at night which can contribute to trouble sleeping comfortably for more than one to two hours at a time.

REHABILITATION

Leg exercises will be given to you through this booklet and your electronic recovery application. ***Chose only 1 source to avoid confusion.*** These exercises should be performed each hour. We prefer that you rest with your ankles elevated above the level of the heart and knee straight. To prevent heel sores, place a pillow under your calf to keep your heel off the bed. The pillow should not be placed under your knee -- it is important to keep the knee flat!

Following knee replacement surgery, all patients receive therapy. Joint Replacement nurses and physical therapists work together to help strengthen your muscles and increase the motion in your knee. Our goal is to ensure your independence and to discharge you to the comfort of your home.

Before discharge you should have practiced and be able to:

- Dress yourself
- Get in and out of a bed, chair, shower, or bathtub
- Use bathroom adaptive equipment if needed
- Walk with a walker or crutches
- Go up and down stairs
- Manage pain
- Do your home exercise program

Your Rehab Team

We believe that your family is an important part of the rehab team that will work with you to develop goals based on your individual needs. Family members or friends are urged to attend therapy sessions to learn appropriate techniques of care and how to assist you at home.

Postoperative Physical Therapy

A comprehensive physical therapy regimen is crucial to your recovery. As soon as possible, we want you to try to lift your operated leg. Initially, you will have some discomfort with this exercise. After two or three leg lifts, the discomfort will decrease. Gaining muscle control to lift and move your leg will speed up your recovery and help you to get in and out of bed safely.

You are given exercises to do at home and will begin outpatient therapy 1 week after surgery. Regaining knee motion early prevents stiffness that might interfere with the way you walk and will help ensure the successful result we want for your knee. Your therapists know from experience how much to push you, and you are encouraged to work hard with them. Your physical therapy will be uncomfortable at first and taking pain medicine before therapy allows you to participate.

After discharge, you are encouraged to attend outpatient physical therapy several times a week. The activity of getting out of your house and going to a therapy center is part of your recovery. Therapy improves your knee motion, strength, and endurance. If you are not ready for outpatient therapy, your case manager will assist in arranging therapy in your home.

DISCHARGE INFORMATION

Final Discharge Instructions/Prescriptions

Your nurse will see you before discharge and answer any questions you may have. At the time of discharge, the nurse will review your prescriptions and discharge instructions. Once home, you should begin to immediately elevate and ice your operative extremity. Once pain is controlled, begin to decrease the number of narcotic medications you take and increase the interval of time between doses. Pain medication is often best taken before initiating therapy. For mild and moderate pain, a non-narcotic medication should be used.

Written Discharge Instructions

You should receive a copy of our discharge instructions. If you have not received discharge instructions, please contact our office immediately (703-619-4400) to obtain instructions.

Going Home by Car

Patients are able to go home by car after joint replacement surgery. If your trip will take more than two hours, plan on allowing one or more stops for walking and exercising your legs. Please be sure to arrange your ride home prior to surgery.

By Airplane

If you need to travel by air, it is important to request a bulkhead or first-class seat, so that you will have enough room to stretch out your leg during the flight. It is advisable to have a travel companion, who can help with your luggage and with getting on and off the plane. Occasionally, your surgeon may recommend that a long airplane ride be postponed for several days after discharge.

Getting into Your House & Using Stairs

The physical therapist will teach you how to go up and down steps. You should have someone help you with steps until you are comfortable and secure with them. Remember that when you use a staircase, your crutches go under your arm on the opposite side from the railing. To go up the stairs, start with your unoperated leg; to go down, begin with crutches and the operated leg.

RETURNING FOR YOUR FIRST POSTOPERATIVE VISIT

Our physician assistants commonly see our postoperative replacement patients approximately 4-6 weeks from the time of their surgery. Our staff will arrange this for you.

This first follow-up visit will include an examination of the knee. X-rays of the operated knee will be obtained to evaluate the alignment and fixation of the implant. You will receive new instructions concerning your allowed activities and the amount of weight you can put on the operated leg. Arrangements can be made on an individual basis for out-of-state patients.

LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

Use of Antibiotics to Prevent Infections

Each year in the United States more than 1 million knee and hip replacements are performed. The infection rate for these procedures is very low. Joint replacement surgeons attempt to lower the infection rate by using prophylactic antibiotics during surgery. In the past, antibiotics were routinely recommended prior to dental work for patients who have had a joint replacement to prevent infection. Currently, the available evidence suggests the chance of oral bacteria causing a joint infection is extremely low. If you are a diabetic with poor blood sugar control, immunocompromised, or have a history of a joint infection, then antibiotics may be indicated for your dental work. We recommend you discuss this with your dentist. Finally, if you are having an invasive/major surgical procedure, we recommend taking antibiotics for prophylaxis against infection. When antibiotics are used, we recommend 2 grams of amoxicillin one hour prior to the procedure. For patients with a penicillin allergy, 600mg clindamycin one hour prior is appropriate.

Follow-up Visits

We strongly recommend a return visit to the Anderson Clinic to confirm that your prosthesis is functioning well. These visits are important whether or not you are having problems with your knee. The plastic liner of your implant may eventually show signs of deterioration. This can only be determined by studying your follow-up x-rays and doing a physical examination.

Ongoing Resources

Anderson Orthopaedic Research Institute

Founded in 1972, the world-renowned Anderson Orthopaedic Research Institute (AORI) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to scientific research and progress in the field of joint replacement. AORI project directors, Anderson Clinic physicians, and the Engh Fellows collaborate on long-term outcome studies of knee replacements. AORI maintains a clinical database of over 20,000 patients. Before surgery and at each postoperative office visit, the doctors ask their patients to fill out a questionnaire. Important information from your physical examination, your postoperative x-rays, and the patient satisfaction questionnaire is documented. Analysis of this data allows us to accurately inform our patients about the expected long-term outcomes of knee replacement surgery. This information also helps us to modify the joint replacement program to ensure the highest quality of care and patient satisfaction.

Our work has received many prestigious awards and continues to change clinical practice patterns of orthopedic surgeons around the globe. We thank you, the patient, for part in helping us continue our tradition of excellence and innovation in joint replacement research.

The Joint Journal Newsletter

Several times a year, AORI produces the *Joint Journal*, a patient newsletter that provides up-to-date information about knee and hip replacement topics. In each issue, we brief you on the progress of some of our past Anderson Clinic patients and inform you of the research at AORI. Following your surgery, your name will be added to the *Joint Journal* mailing list. We invite you to send interesting information or general questions about knee replacement for us to include in the newsletter. Your personal experiences with knee replacement surgery often are of interest to our other readers. You may contact the editor by mail or email at **Research@aori.org**.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Prior To Your Joint Replacement

How Do I Know When It Is Time For A Replacement?

Patients with painful, degenerative hips and knees often present with decreased function, continued pain, and diminished quality of life due to their joints. These individuals have often attempted and failed nonoperative treatment including weight loss, anti-inflammatory medication, acetaminophen, therapy, injections, and/or activity modification. The final decision rests with the patient and is based on the pain and disability from the joint influencing their quality of life.

What Is Outpatient Joint Replacement? Am I A Candidate?

All of our surgeons perform outpatient hip and knee replacement surgery in both surgery center and hospital settings. Patients arrive for surgery 1-2 hours prior to their replacement and typically spend 5-6 hours in total at the facility. Candidates are healthy individuals with a strong social support system. Investigations performed by our surgeons at The Anderson Orthopaedic Research Institute have shown outpatient joint replacement to be safe and effective with high patient satisfaction.

How Long Does It Take To Recover From A Knee Replacement?

Everybody recovers at their own pace. As a general rule, most patients are walking with significantly improved pain by 4-6 weeks after a knee replacement. Maximum benefit is often achieved by 8 months; however, continued improvement in strength, endurance, range of motion, and function can be expected up 12 months following surgery.

How Long Will My Joint Replacement Last?

The Anderson Orthopaedic Research Institute data suggests near 90% of knee replacements will be well-functioning 20 years after surgery. Current data suggests hip and knee replacements have an annual failure rate between 0.5-1.0%

Is There Such A Thing As Being Too Young For A Joint Replacement?

No, there is no such thing as being “too young” to undergo of a joint replacement. In fact, literature suggests that patients younger than 50 years old are highly satisfied with their joint replacement. Certain conditions, such as post-traumatic arthritis (e.g. prior ACL surgery), predispose patient to early joint degeneration and end-stage arthritis. When this occurs and nonoperative treatment has failed, a joint replacement is a perfectly reasonable solution.

What Is My Knee Replacement Made Of?

Knee replacements most commonly consist of cobalt/chromium, titanium, and plastic.

What Are The Risk Of Joint Replacements?

Major complications are rare following hip and knee replacement surgery. The most common surgical complications include infection, implant failure, bleeding, blood clots, fracture, nerve injury, leg length differences, tendon/ligament injuries, continued pain, and stiffness. Medical complications such as heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, and gastrointestinal bleeding are also rare but can occur. Each patient will have a unique risk profile based on their medical history. Our team makes efforts to help patients optimize their health prior to surgery in order to diminish the chance of complications occurring.

How Long Will I Have To Take Off Work?

This heavily depends on the physical nature of your job. Individuals with sedentary jobs can return as early as 2 weeks following surgery if their pain is controlled, they feel they are progressing appropriately, and they no longer require narcotic medication. Those with labor-intensive jobs often plan on taking 6-12 weeks off work prior to returning.

How Much Therapy Will I Need Following My Knee Replacement?

The length of therapy will vary depending on individual patient progress and needs. Some patients are finished with formal physical therapy and are only doing self-directed exercises within 1 month of surgery, while others prefer to continue working with a therapist for up to 3 months following surgery.

Preparing for Your Joint Replacement

What Exercises Should I Do Prior To My Joint Replacement?

Walking and low impact exercises (biking, swimming, elliptical) that elevate the heart rate while improving muscle endurance are the best exercises to perform prior to a joint replacement. Formal physical therapy prior to surgery (“prehab”) is not required for most patients. Bottom line: any exercise that does not cause significant pain is a good exercise.

What Can I Do To Improve My Health Prior To My Joint Replacement?

Maintaining a healthy weight and well-balanced diet will improve your outcome following surgery. If you are already healthy, keep it up! If you have active or chronic medical issues, you should work with your primary care provider or health coach to optimize your health prior to surgery. Common health problems with room for improvement include obesity, malnutrition, diabetes, anemia, heart failure, kidney disease, and smoking.

What Should I Eat While Preparing For My Replacement?

A well-balanced diet is important leading up to surgery. Increasing protein intake is encouraged, as higher protein levels improve healing and recovery following surgery. Avoid processed foods, soda, and other foods/drinks with added sugar. Having stable/controlled blood sugars will decrease your risk of complications following surgery.

How Should I Prepare My Home For My Upcoming Joint Replacement?

- Prepare a comfortable area with your normal essentials nearby.
- Pick up throw rugs and anything on the floor that you believe may trip you.
- Move long phone and electrical cords out of the way.
- Place non-skid surfaces in place in tubs and showers.
- Use footwear with non-skid soles.
- Install a handrail in your staircase if you must use the stairs and do not have one.
- Night-lights in the hallways and bathrooms.
- Flat, firm mattresses are preferred.
- Prepare meals ahead of time.
- Have fresh linens on your bed for when you return home.
- If you have pets, make sure you arrange for their care as well.
- Carry a phone with you to call for help in case of an emergency.
- Arrange transportation for groceries, follow-up visits, and other essentials.

What Equipment Will I Need Following My Joint Replacement?

- You will need cane, walker, and/or crutches depending on your comfort level with each. During the first few days, we encourage a walker or two-crutches for balance.

- Compressive ice wrap, ice machine, or bags of ice for knee replacements
- An elevated toilet seat is often convenient, but not mandatory.
- A reaching tool for picking items off the floor can be helpful.

After Joint Replacement Surgery

What Can I Expect Immediately After My Surgery?

The first week following joint replacement surgery is often the hardest time during your recovery. It is normal to experience pain, swelling, fatigue, and weakness. Recovering from a joint replacement is a marathon, not a sprint! During your first week, you should rest, frequently ice and elevate leg, walk every hour, take your medications as instructed, and use our Rally Recover app to guide you through the recovery process.

How Can I Decrease Pain and Swelling After Surgery?

Elevating, icing, taking your medications as instructed, walking every hour, and doing your exercises will help improve pain and swelling. It is normal to have swelling after surgery; however, our goal is to minimize swelling in an effort to reduce pain and speed recovery.

How Should I Take My Medications?

For detailed instructions, please refer to our [Medications For Surgery](#) handout. Some patients may have received medications that differ from this list, which means that we discussed a specialized plan for you during your office visit. A sample is included at the end of this booklet.

How Often Should Ice Therapy Be Used?

For a minimum of 10 days, you should ice and elevate your operative extremity for 30-40 minutes every hour you are awake. This will help decrease swelling and inflammation, which will speed your recovery and decrease your pain. You may continue doing this for as long as you find it to be helpful.

How Should I Apply Ice My Leg?

There are multiple ways to properly apply ice to your leg. Ice machines, cold-compression wraps, and standard ice wrapped in a cloth will all do the trick! Remember to never place ice directly onto your skin.

How Should I Elevate My Leg, And Does Elevating My Leg Help My Recovery?

Elevating your legs decreases swelling and inflammation through improving blood flow back to the heart. Proper elevation entails laying on your back with your legs elevated 1-2 feet in the air. If sitting in a recliner, make sure to place several pillows under your calf (not under your knee) to ensure your ankle is above the level of your heart.

Why Has My Pain Increased 10-14 Days After Surgery?

“Over-doing it” is common! As you increase your activity level, it is common to have 1-2 days of increased pain and swelling. This is a normal part of recovery and will occur less often as time passes.

Why Do I Feel Clicking In My Joint Replacement?

Clicking sensations are common immediately following joint replacements. Fortunately, these sensations decrease over time.

What Should I Eat During My Joint Replacement Recovery?

A high protein, low sugar diet with plenty of vegetables is strongly encouraged. Cut out soda,

juice, processed foods, and other high-sugar foods. Drink at least 8 glasses of water daily to stay hydrated, decrease nausea, and help your body heal. Protein supplementation drinks are fine to take, so long as they contain low sugar content.

Incision Care

When Should I Remove My Dressing?

You should remove your dressing 7-10 days after surgery. It should peel off like a band-aid. There is no need to cover the incision after this.

What Should My Incision Look Like?

Early on, your incision should be slightly raised and covered in surgical glue. Your sutures are under the skin and will dissolve over time. As this happens, your incision will flatten out, swelling will subside, and things will become more cosmetically pleasing.

Can I Get My Incision Wet?

Yes...to a certain extent. You may begin taking showers the day following surgery with your dressing in place, allowing the water to run down the leg. Once the dressing is taken off, you may allow the water to run down your operative leg, but please do not scrub the incision. Do not submerge the incision in water (bath, pool, ocean, etc.) until after your 4-week visit.

Can I Apply Anything On My Incision?

Do not apply anything to your incision until after your 4-week postoperative visit.

Activities

What activities can I do during the first month after a joint replacement?

Walking is the best exercise. You may walk as much as you can comfortably tolerate. Be careful not to “overdo it”. Activities such as riding a stationary bike, walking on a treadmill, and modified yoga (no range of motion extremes) are encouraged. Chipping and putting is permitted for golfers. Please refrain from higher-impact activities and activities that cause increased torque on your new replacement, such as running, tennis, squash, or racquetball.

When can I return to higher-impact activities after a joint replacement?

After your four-week postoperative visit, you will be allowed to partake in any activity you feel comfortable performing that does involve jumping or running. This includes hiking, bicycling outdoors, swimming, golf, tennis, squash, racquetball, or horseback riding. Activities that involve running are discouraged until 3 months postoperatively.

How Should I Navigate Stairs After A Joint Replacement?

The general rule with stairs: up with the good, down with the bad. When going up stairs, use a railing and lead with your non-operative leg. When going down stairs, use a railing and lead with your operative leg. Have somebody available to help you perform stairs until you are confident and comfortable with performing them on your own.

For a visual demonstration, please visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKGrD46gd_k

When Can I Drive?

Literature suggests reaction time for driving returns approximately 2 weeks following a hip replacement and 4 weeks following a knee replacement. Patients must be off narcotic medication at this time and walking without an assistive device (cane/walker) prior to attempting driving.

When Can I Have Sex?

We recommend avoiding sex until at least 2 weeks following surgery. Patients with hip replacements should avoid extremes of flexion or extension of their hip during intercourse. Knee replacement patients should avoid kneeling on their incision. Being positioned on the bottom is preferable for the first month. The basic recommendation is to start slow and stop if you are experiencing pain or uncertainty.

What positions are safe for sleeping after surgery?

Sleeping can be difficult following a joint replacement. Sleeping on your back or on your non-operative side with a pillow between your legs are often the most comfortable position.