
Joint Replacement Information

Joint replacement surgery is very successful, even in young patients nowadays, because of improvements in bearing surfaces, implant design, technological advances, surgical techniques and advanced anesthetic techniques.

You will make the decision to have your hip or knee joint replaced when the pain in your hip or knee is adversely affecting your quality of life. It is all about your quality of life and being able to do those activities that are important to you. When nonsurgical treatments such as exercises, medications, activity modifications and injections are no longer helping you, you should consider joint replacement surgery to restore your function.

I require all of my patients to have a body mass index (BMI) of less than 36 prior to joint replacement surgery because the complication rate is significantly increased when your BMI is above 36. You can calculate your BMI on my website (FrankKolisekMD.com). I have found these two books to be helpful: *Eat Fat to Get Thin* and *Wheat Belly*. The best outcomes and the best care is what I strive to provide for my patients.

Returning to Activities and Work Following Surgery

Resumption of normal activities after joint replacement is highly dependent on the individual patient. The first two weeks are the most difficult. Hips recover faster than knees. Around six weeks after surgery, most patients are resuming their normal activities, even those activities that they had trouble doing before surgery like walking for exercise.

Most people with a sedentary job are back to work by six weeks and eight weeks for a more physically demanding job. Certainly, you can work from home whenever you feel like it.

Around three weeks after surgery, most patients are driving a car and using a cane to walk. I restrict long distance travel, more than two hours away from home, for the first month after surgery because of the risk of blood clots. I ask all of my patients to use a cane for 1 month after surgery to allow the soft tissues to heal and to allow the bone to grow to the implant for biological long term fixation. I do not recommend trying to see how far you can walk two weeks after surgery. I am more concerned about how you and your prosthesis are doing 20 to 25 years after surgery, so I want to optimize your healing.

Your hip or knee will have some swelling, warmth and discomfort for about three months after surgery as that is when the stitches underneath the skin start to dissolve and the soft tissues heal. You will fatigue easily and will not sleep well for the first month after surgery, but this will improve with time. Don't be afraid to push yourself.

Surgery

It takes me about 40 minutes to replace your hip or knee joint. I do all of the surgery. I do a muscle sparing knee approach with advanced technology for placement of the knee prosthesis. I do the direct superior hip approach which is very muscle sparing and does not require hip precautions after surgery. We use advanced pain protocols, including periarticular pain injections into the soft tissues around the hip or knee joint to help control pain. After your surgery, you will go to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) for approximately one and a half hours. I will talk with your family in the Surgical Waiting Area immediately after your operation.

In the Hospital After Surgery

Physical and Occupational therapists will help you with your activities of daily living. We use a rapid rehabilitation protocol, so you will be up walking about four hours after surgery. You can go home once you “pass the test.” Passing the test means that you can get in and out of bed, go to the bathroom, get dressed and go up and down steps using either a walker or crutches on your own. The whole goal is to help you become safe on your own so you can return home, even if you live alone. The therapists will also teach you a few exercises that you will continue to do after you leave the hospital on your own at home. We will follow you in the office to make sure you are hitting your goals.

Going Home

A discharge planner will help coordinate your discharge from the hospital. We will use any necessary resources in order to make sure you are safe.

Most of my patients are able to safely return home from the hospital on the day after surgery. If you live alone, I recommend that you have a family member or neighbor or friend stop by once a day to see if you need anything. Some of my younger healthier patients can even be done as an outpatient, going home the same day as the surgery.

Follow-up

At two weeks after surgery, you will come into my office and we will see how you are doing with your exercises and remove your clips or sutures. If you live more than one hour away from my office, then your clips or sutures will be removed at your home so you don't have to travel that far with a swollen painful leg. If you are doing well with your exercises (like bending your knee past 90 degrees), then we will add more exercises for you to continue to do on your own. If you are starting to get a little behind, like not being able to bend your knee to 90 degrees, then we will send you to a therapist for them to push you a little harder. Remember that the first two to three weeks are the most difficult, especially after knee replacements. We will then see you again at six weeks to get an X-ray and monitor your progress.

Therapy

We usually start with you doing the exercises on your own at home as you are the therapist. You will know what to do when you leave the hospital as we will give you a handout of the exercises. We will follow you closely to monitor your progress and will get a therapist involved if you are having trouble meeting the goals. We want you to stay on schedule.

Antibiotics After Surgery

Following total joint replacement surgery, you will need to take antibiotics prior to having dental cleanings and dental procedures. The antibiotics are important to prevent any infection from seeding into the total joint. Always let your doctor or dentist know that you have a joint replacement when you schedule any type of procedure. If they will not give you an antibiotic, then call our office and we will prescribe it for you.

Scheduling Your Surgery

Call **317.884.5160** to schedule your surgery. You will be medically cleared for surgery at the hospital a couple of weeks prior to surgery. It is at this time that your general health risks will be evaluated and any precautionary measures will be taken to decrease the chances of any complications.

Thank you for allowing me to take care of you, and thanks for your trust in me. Bri Ancich, PA-C, is my physician assistant, and our common goal is for you to have the best result possible!

Frank R. Kolisek, MD