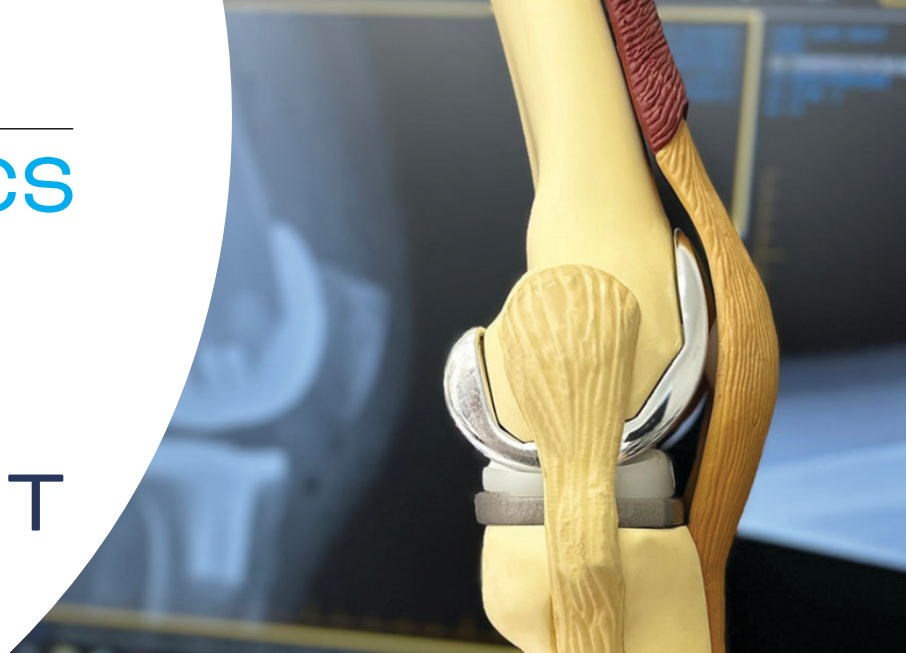


# KNEE REPLACEMENT



## What are the benefits of surgery?

You should get good relief from pain, and be able to walk more easily. Total knee joint replacement (TKJR) is a well proven operation that gives many years of pain relief, with 95% of replacements lasting 15 years or more.

## Are there any alternatives to hip replacement?

Simple painkillers such as paracetamol and anti-inflammatory painkillers such as ibuprofen can help control the pain of arthritis. A cortisone injection can give, on average, 3 months relief from pain, and has <1% risk of infection.

Using a walking stick on the opposite side to the affected knee can make walking easier. Physiotherapy may help to strengthen weak muscles. An exercycle set on zero resistance, 20 mins a day, may help.

## What does the operation involve?

Various anaesthetic techniques are possible. The operation takes 90 minutes, most people have a spinal anaesthetic and sedation, or a general anaesthetic.

Your surgeon will make a cut down the centre of the front of your knee, and remove the damaged joint surfaces. They will replace these with an artificial joint made of metal and plastic. The joint replacement components are cemented onto the bone surfaces.

## How can I prepare myself for the operation?

If you smoke, stopping smoking now will reduce your risk of developing complications and will improve your long term health.

Try to maintain a healthy weight. You have a higher risk of developing complications if you are overweight. Regular exercise should help to prepare you for the operation, help you to recover and improve your long term health. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

## What complications can happen?

Some complications can be serious and can even cause death (risk of dying: 1 in 1,000 in the first 90 days after surgery).

## General complications of any operation

- bleeding
- infection of the surgical site (wound)
- allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- acute kidney injury
- difficulty passing urine
- venous thromboembolism
- chest infection
- heart attack
- stroke



## Specific complications of this operation

- damage to nerves around your knee  
numbness on the outer side (lateral) of the scar is unavoidable but often recovers.
- damage to blood vessels around your knee
- slow healing of your wound
- stiffness after the surgery (about 3-4% of people need a manipulation under anaesthetic to break up scar tissue, after 2-4 months, if the range of flexion/bend is not improving)
- infection in your knee - 1% risk
- continued discomfort
- however, the most likely outcome is a good result with excellent relief of pain, and 80% recovery over about 3 months, then gradual further improvement for another 12 months

## How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home after 2-3 nights, usually on a blood thinner to reduce the chance of blood clots.

You will need crutches for 6 weeks, and I will see you for a wound check at 2 weeks, then again at 6 weeks.

Physiotherapy after leaving hospital will help, and you will get some exercises to do at home.

Most people make an excellent recovery, have less pain, and can walk much better. If you are 60 or older, a knee replacement has a 90% chance of lasting the rest of your life. 95% of knees are still functioning well 15 years later, but a small number of people (<5%) may need further surgery.

## Advice once you're home:

If you suffer wound bleeding, fever/chills, or chest pain/coughing up blood, contact your surgeon or GP, or go to the local Emergency Dept.

## Summary:

Knee replacement is an excellent operation for arthritic pain, with a low risk of serious problems, and the most likely result is a good or excellent outcome.