



Frequently Asked Questions about Total Knee Replacement

What is Knee Replacement?

A total knee replacement is an operation that involves replacing the worn or missing cartilage of the knee. The knee itself is not actually replaced; rather, it is resurfaced, and a substitute for the cartilage is cemented on to the ends of the bones. Traditionally, a metal alloy is attached to the thigh bone (femur) and a plastic spacer is placed on the shin bone (tibia) and kneecap (patella). This creates a new weight-bearing surface and a joint that functions smoothly, relieving discomfort and allowing you to resume normal daily activities.

Who should have a Knee Replacement?

When severe pain limits your everyday activities such as walking, using stairs and getting in and out of chairs, you may want to consider knee replacement surgery. You may also benefit from surgery if you have moderate or severe knee pain while resting, swelling that does not improve with rest or medication, bowing of your knee, or the inability to bend and straighten your knee. Together, you and your orthopedic surgeon will determine if surgery is the best choice to alleviate your discomfort.

Is there an alternative to Knee Replacement?

There is no harm in waiting if non-operative methods—such as medication, physical therapy or synthetic joint fluid—are controlling your discomfort. If these conservative treatments are no longer effective, and your knee pain is impacting your quality of life, your physician may recommend knee replacement surgery to help you return to normal daily activities.

How long is the hospital stay?

After total knee replacement surgery, you will spend an average of two to three days in the hospital. Most patients begin standing and walking with the help of a physical therapist and a walking device the day after surgery. Each day, you will increase your mobility, which will help prevent blood clots and promote your return to active living.

What about pain?

Through advances in technology and medicine, several options for pain control are available. Your orthopedic surgeon will discuss these options with you, and your patient care team will monitor your pain level to be sure that you are as comfortable as possible.

Where will I go after discharge from the hospital?

Your diagnosis, insurance and progress in the hospital will determine where you will go upon discharge. You may be able to go directly home to outpatient rehab, the support of home health care services, or you may transfer to a rehabilitation facility, where the average length of stay is five days, before going home. A discharge planner will help you with this decision and make the necessary arrangements.

How long is recuperation?

Recovery varies with each person. It is essential that you follow your orthopedic surgeon's instructions, as well as your prescribed exercise program supervised by a physical therapist to achieve the best results. You should be able to resume daily activities in two to four weeks after surgery. Some discomfort with activity and at night is

common for several weeks, and some patients find a walker to be helpful during this time.

Most people are able to return to previous activities such as recreational walking, biking, swimming, golf, doubles tennis, bowling or dancing. Your doctor may, however, advise you to avoid high impact sports, such as long distance running or downhill skiing.

What is the success rate?

Most patients—90 to 95 percent—achieve good to excellent results with relief of pain, greatly improved mobility and a return to activity level. Currently, 90 percent of knee replacements are expected to last at least ten years, and 80-85 percent last 20 years or more.

Are there complications?

As with any surgery, there is a risk of complications. Although relatively rare, the most frequent types of complications after joint replacement include blood clots and infections. Your orthopedic surgeon will address your concerns and discuss the measures taken by Paoli Hospital doctors and staff to minimize the risk of complications.

How can I learn more?

Paoli Hospital offers Hip and Knee Pain Seminars to help you learn about causes of hip pain and possible treatment options. At some point, you will want to see an orthopedic specialist to attain a proper diagnosis for your pain. To register for a free one-hour seminar, or to make an appointment with an orthopedic specialist, call

1.866.CALL.MLH.

For those who have already scheduled a joint replacement, we strongly suggest you attend a Pre operative class 1-4 weeks before your surgery. To register for a pre operative class call the Orthopedic Program Manager at **484.565.1537**.

Voices of Experience

Our “Voices of Experience” program can put you in contact with someone who has had knee replacement surgery at Paoli Hospital. If you have already seen an orthopedic surgeon and would like to speak to a patient with first-hand experience, please call **484.565.1537**.

The **Paoli Hospital Orthopedic Specialists** perform thousands of procedures each year, with a combined 300 plus years experience. From evaluation and treatment through recovery and rehabilitation, Paoli’s orthopedic professionals are committed to providing you with the most advanced, effective care for your condition or injury, including:

- Total Joint Replacement
 - Sports Medicine
 - Arthritis Care
 - Cartilage Restoration
 - Shoulder Treatment
 - Hand, Wrist and Elbow Treatment
 - Foot and Ankle Conditions
 - Spine treatment
 - Osteoporosis Management
 - Fracture Care
 - Minimally invasive procedures are the surgical standard whenever possible