

Total Knee Replacement

A total knee replacement, also called a total knee arthroplasty, is a surgical procedure in which the worn out or damaged surfaces of the knee joint are removed and replaced with artificial parts. Arthritis, injury, or other diseases of the joint can damage the protective layer of cartilage, causing extreme pain and difficulty in performing daily activities. The goal of a total knee replacement is to relieve pain and restore the alignment and function of your knee.

Do I need a total knee replacement?

A total knee replacement might be recommended if you have:

- severe osteoarthritis
- rheumatoid arthritis
- avascular necrosis of the knee
- bone growth disorders

The decision to undergo a joint replacement should be made after an assessment and thorough discussion with your orthopaedic surgeon. Ultimately, the decision rests with you, and it's important to carefully consider all the information provided, including expected benefits, potential risks, and available alternatives. The recommendation is usually made keeping in mind the following factors:

- pain that has not been relieved by pain medication, physiotherapy or walking aids
- pain severe enough that it prevents work, walking, recreation and daily activities
- sleep is disturbed due to pain
- stiff and swollen knee
- X-rays confirm the presence of arthritis

How does knee replacement surgery work?

Knee replacement is done in hospital under general anaesthesia or spinal anaesthesia. After your knee is cleaned and prepared for surgery, your surgeon makes an incision over your knee, from above the kneecap to below it. This incision may be up to 30 cm long. The soft tissues are then moved to expose your knee joint.

Your surgeon cuts through the bottom of your femur (thighbone) and the top of your tibia (shin bone) and the damaged knee joint is removed. The new prosthetic joint is precisely fitted into position and anchored using bone cement. The soft tissues are then put back into place and the incision is closed with sutures or clips.

How long does knee replacement surgery take?

Knee replacement surgery takes 1-2 hours.

What to expect after surgery?

Recovery after a knee replacement takes time and this time varies considerably from person to person. Full recovery typically takes 6–12 months. During this period strength and flexibility should steadily improve.