

Total Knee Joint Replacement



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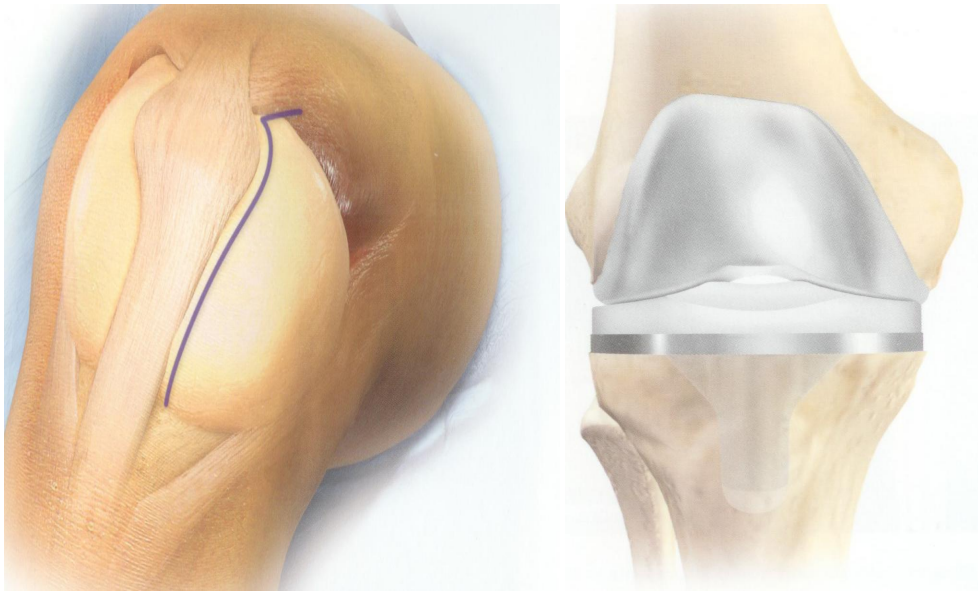
You have arthritis of the knee. This has occurred because the cushioning cartilage in the knee is breaking down. The cartilage starts to break down, then disintegrate and bone spurs are formed. The cushioning cartilage goes so the bones in your knee joint start to rub together. This can result in significant pain, stiffness and instability. When the arthritis occurs on only one side of your knee your leg can become deformed.



When the arthritis is severe a total knee joint replacement is required. The arthritic cartilage and bone is removed and replaced with a metal and plastic total knee joint replacement.



A cut will be made over the front of your knee and the diseased cartilage and bone is exchanged for the total knee joint replacement.



This is an excellent operation for relieving pain and restoring quality of life however and it requires a lot of hard work and determination to get the knee moving as it will be sore and swollen after surgery. The end result is as dependant on the effort you put in than the operation. The knee typically remains warm swollen and stiff for approximately 3-4 months. Most people are at 70-80% at 6 weeks and 90% at 6 months however it can take up to 2 years to gain maximum benefit

Complications are uncommon but do occur. The most serious is an infection. Hopefully this can be treated with a knee washout and IV antibiotics. Thankfully this only occurs in less than 1% of patients. If this is unsuccessful the replacement needs to be removed and an antibiotic knee inserted which is replaced later. The likelihood of this is 1 in 500. Other problems include blood clots, nerve and blood vessel injuries and stiffness and all people will have numbness on the outside of your knee. The knee replacement is made of metal and plastic thus it does click and clunk a little bit

Total knee replacements do not last forever. Like a car tyre they wear out the more you use them. Thus you need to be sensible. High impact activities such as running, dancing and tennis should be avoided. However if you look after your knee there is a 94% chance your knee will last 10 years and a 80% chance it will last 15 years. If you are over 60 there is a 90% chance your implant will last a lifetime It is important for you to realise that your knee will not be normal but if all goes well and you work hard your knee will be greatly improved from the arthritic knee you currently have.