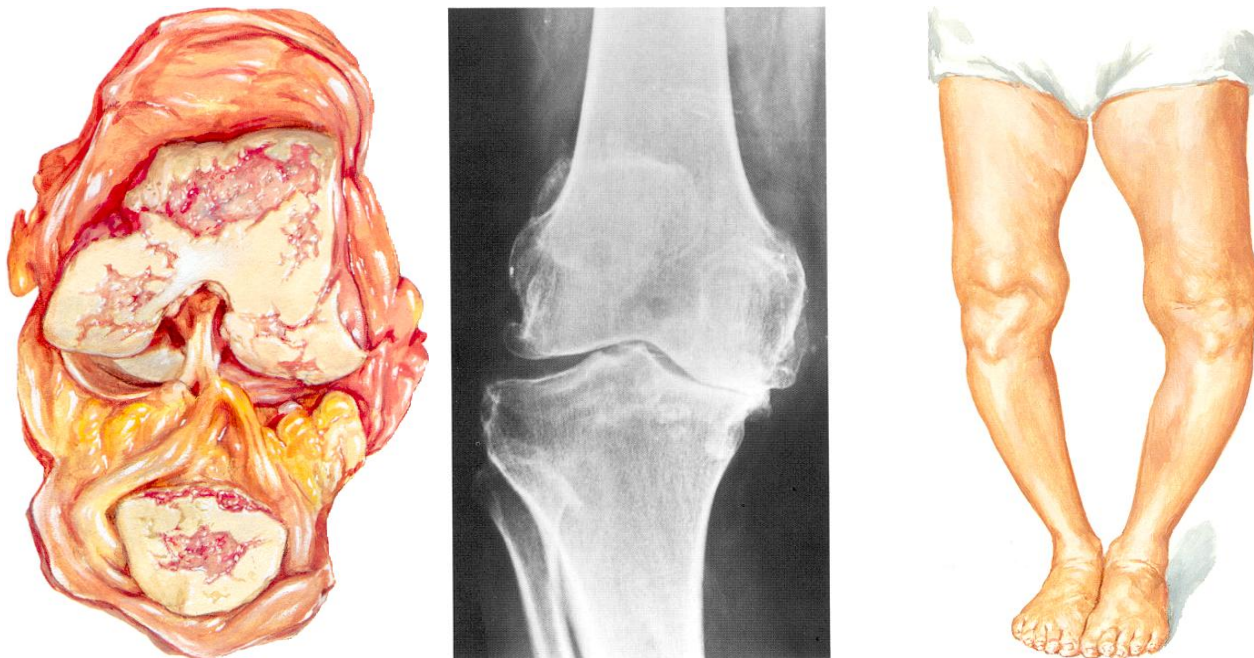


Total Knee Joint Replacement

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You have arthritis of the knee. This has occurred because the cushioning cartilage in your knee has broken down. When the cushioning cartilage and meniscus (shock absorber) have worn out the bones in your knee joint start to rub together. Nerve endings are exposed so significant pain, stiffness and instability may develop. When the arthritis occurs on one side of your knee your leg becomes deformed.



When the arthritis is advanced a total knee joint replacement is required. The arthritic cartilage and bone is removed and replaced with a highly engineered metal and plastic total knee joint replacement that resurfaces the damaged knee.



This is an excellent operation for relieving pain and restoring quality of life however it requires time, hard work and determination to get the knee moving as it will be a sore and swollen for a while after surgery. The end result is as dependant on the effort you put in after your knee replacement as having the surgery

The knee typically remains warm, swollen, stiff and sore for approximately 6 months.

Most people are better than before the surgery at 6 weeks and 80% at 6 months however it can take up to 5 years to gain maximum benefit. There is however wide variability in the recovery time. Every patient is different so please be patient

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 300.

Other problems include blood clots (DVT & PE), nerve and blood vessel injuries, wound healing issues, instability and stiffness and most people will have numbness on the outside of your knee so it may feel unusual kneeling. The knee replacement is made of metal & plastic thus it can click little bit. This will improve as your muscles get stronger. The knee replacement typically gets rid of most but not necessarily all of your pain. On average your pain a year after surgery with activity is 1/10. If you over do it the knee replacement may ache. This is nature's way off telling you to back off.

Your knee replacement may not last forever. Like a car tyre it can wear out the more you use it. Thus you need to be sensible. If it is sore and swollen back off. Let pain and swelling be your indicators on how much you do. High impact activities such as running should be avoided. However if you look after your knee there is a 97% chance your knee will last 15 years. This is age dependant. The younger you are the higher the failure rate. If you are younger than 60 at the time of surgery this drops to 94%. If you are over 60 there is over a 95% chance your implant will last a lifetime

Our NZ Joint registry shows the knee replacements last longer than the hip replacements. It is important for you to realise that your knee may not feel normal but if all goes well and you don't over do it your knee replacement will be greatly improved from the arthritic knee you currently have.

An animated video of Total Knee Replacement can be found at <https://bit.ly/2J3TGoh>