

About Your Total Knee Replacement Surgery

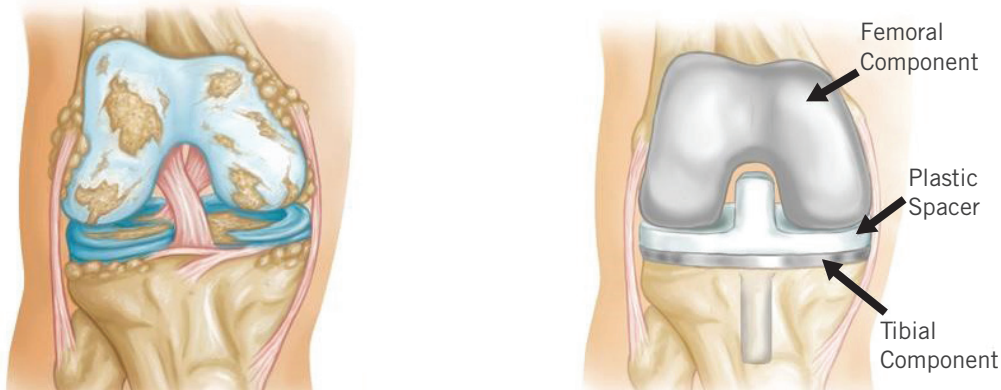


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The Procedure

Total knee replacement surgery is also called a total knee arthroplasty. The procedure usually takes about 1-3 hours. It is done under spinal anesthesia or general anesthesia, with a nerve block to help with pain control after surgery.

Members of your care team in the operating room will include: your surgeon, a physician assistant and/or nurse practitioner, nurses, anesthesiologist, nurse anesthetist, and two certified surgical technicians.

During the surgery, the surgeon will cut the end of the femur (thigh bone) and replace it with a metal implant on the inside of the knee. Patients are often surprised to learn that the “cut” of the femur and tibia bone is really a relatively minimal resection/shaving off of just the very end of the bone. The top piece of the tibia (shin bone) will be cut and replaced with a metal and plastic piece on the inside of the knee. The patella (knee cap) is usually also resurfaced (new surface) with a plastic component. The important soft tissues around your knee (ligaments, tendons, capsule) are carefully protected and preserved during the surgery.

Your surgeon will talk with you before surgery about the plan for your procedure and will decide which type of incision and implants are best for you. Your incision will be closed with stitches, staples, and/or glue. After surgery, the incision will be covered with a special surgical bandage to prevent infection. Do not take the bandage off. It will be removed at your first post-operative appointment.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long is my knee replacement expected to last?

Most patients can expect their knee replacement to last 15-20 years or longer, depending on your health, lifestyle, and activity level. Talk to your surgeon about how long you can expect your knee replacement to last.

How long is the recovery time?

Recovery time is different for each patient. Most patients will see a noticeable improvement in their knee strength and function within the first few months after surgery. Full healing can be expected around 1 year after surgery.

Will I have physical therapy before surgery?

Your surgeon may prescribe exercises or physical therapy for you to do before surgery to help strengthen the muscles in your leg. A physical therapist can also help you learn how to use an assistive device, such as a 2-wheeled front rolling walker, that you will need after surgery. In general, the healthier and stronger you are before surgery, the easier your recovery will be after surgery.

What exercises can I do before surgery?

Please refer to the exercise handout in your folder or ask your physical therapist.

Will I need special equipment at home?

Yes. You will need a 2-wheeled front rolling walker and a straight cane. Bring the walker with you on the day of your surgery. You can buy or borrow these items, depending on your preference. You may be able to borrow from a local lending closet, fire station, church, neighbor, friend, or family member. A prescription can also be provided for these items, which may be covered by your health insurance in some cases. Your surgical care team will let you know if there is any other special equipment that you may need.



Straight Cane



2-Wheeled Front Rolling Walker

Will I have physical therapy after surgery?

Yes, physical therapy is a very important part of recovering from knee surgery. Physical therapy will begin in the hospital or surgery center soon after your surgery. Every patient will have a physical therapy evaluation before they are discharged. Your nurse and therapist will help you walk in the hall, go up and down stairs, and will show you how to do some exercises in bed. They will also talk with you about making your daily routine safe in your home while you heal. You will be instructed on what physical therapy or exercises you should be doing at home on your own.

What services will I need at home?

Your surgeon and care team will help you decide what services you need at home, if any. The plan will be based on your mobility and insurance. A nurse care manager will help you with the referral process to the home health agency if one is needed for therapy.

When can I drive?

This answer is different for everyone. For your safety, do not drive until you are cleared to do so by your surgeon's office. Your surgeon's team will assess and evaluate your healing at your first postoperative appointment.

When can I go back to work?

This answer is different for everyone. Most people can go back to work within 12 weeks after surgery. This may be slightly different for you. Your surgeon will tell you when you have healed enough to safely go back to work, based on your job demands.

For a sedentary or 'desk job', some patients are able to go back to work as soon as 2-4 weeks after surgery. People with physically demanding jobs may need to wait 4-12 weeks before returning to full duty in order to make sure they have fully healed.

Ask your employer if you will need a written Return to Work note from your surgeon's office. Depending on your job, there may be some restrictions that you need to follow at work as you continue to heal.

Forms to file with your employer before surgery



You may need to submit one or more of the following forms:

- Leave of absence
- Short term disability
- FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act)

Ask your employer to send the paperwork to our office before your surgery date, along with your signed Release of Information consent form.

Our office fax: 207-781-1552

Can the metal implants in my knee set off metal detectors?

Yes, the metal implants in your knee may set off metal detectors. At your post-operative appointment visit to our office, we will give you an info card that shows that you have had this surgery. Keep the card in your wallet, especially when traveling. When you do go through metal detectors, be sure to tell the person operating the metal detector that you have had a joint replacement. They will then screen/wand you, as needed.

Please do not forget to bring with you an attitude of SUCCESS!

Follow-up Appointments

You will have follow-up appointments with your provider for incision care and to make sure you are healing properly. These follow-up appointments will either be in-person or via telehealth. You will have a follow-up appointment within 2 weeks, and another one 6-8 weeks after your surgery. It is important that you attend these follow-up appointments.

If you have questions



**Please call us if you have any questions or concerns.
We are here to help you have a safe and successful surgery.**

Office hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m-5 p.m.

**Maine Medical Partners Orthopedics — Joint Replacement
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