

KNEE AND HIP REPLACEMENT



Joint replacement surgery has become very common in the United States, with surgeons replacing more than a million hips and knees each year with very high success rates. Nine out of 10 people who get a hip or knee replacement have significantly reduced pain and increased mobility.

Who is a candidate for replacement surgery?

Although joint replacement is usually needed later in life, anyone who experiences chronic joint pain or reduced mobility in the knees or hips is a candidate for replacement surgery (depending on a variety of other factors). Surgeons will look for signs of osteoarthritis or joint degeneration, the most common forms of arthritis, as the starting point for a plan of treatment.

What are the risk factors for replacement surgery?

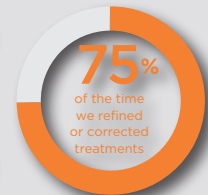
Knee and hip replacements carry the same dangers as any other major surgery, including risk of infection and blood clots. People with heart conditions, poorly controlled diabetes, or weak immune systems are the most vulnerable. Antibiotics and blood thinners may be prescribed to prevent these complications.

Should I have my joint replaced?

Only a doctor can tell if you need a joint replaced. X-rays and arthroscopic examinations are used to assess the joints and look for damage, and replacement is not always the appropriate treatment method, depending on the severity of joint deterioration. Exercise, physical therapy, and medication are usually the precursors to replacement surgery.

If you have suffered from any long-term joint pain, you should see your doctor to learn more about treatments and lifestyle choices that could mitigate that pain. If you do need joint replacement, your general health, nutrition, and exercise habits will be a part of any treatment program going forward.

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*Learn what questions to ask your doctor before deciding on surgery at Best Doctors' next quarterly webinar. Details coming soon.