

Is Joint Replacement Right for You?

If you're tired of suffering with an aching knee or hip, you may want to consider joint replacement, which is one of the most common orthopedic surgeries performed today. The number of joint replacement surgeries performed each year is predicted to skyrocket, with the knee and hip being the most frequently replaced joints. By 2030, hip replacement surgeries could soar to 572,000 and total knee replacements may reach an astounding 3.48 million, according to a study conducted by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. Joint replacement may be the solution for a friend, neighbor or family member, but is it right for you?

Determining your options

Joint replacement surgery can offer pain relief, better mobility and an improved quality of life – for the right candidate. If you've experienced one or more of the following symptoms, you may benefit from joint replacement:

- Frequent or intense joint pain
- Trouble walking, sitting down or standing up
- Joint stiffness or swelling
- Osteoarthritis

When is joint replacement the right choice?

“The severity of your condition will likely be a significant factor in the decision to have joint replacement surgery,” says Nashoba Valley Medical Center Orthopedic Surgeon Paul Harasimowicz, MD. “If aching and stiff joints cause constant pain, limit your ability to walk or climb stairs, and affect your quality of life, you may be a likely candidate for joint replacement surgery.”

In addition to the extent of your pain and lost mobility, your doctor will consider other treatment options such as lifestyle modifications,



medications, injections, physical therapy or aids such as a brace. Patients who are unresponsive to these treatments may determine that joint replacement is the appropriate option.

What can I expect?

Joint replacement surgery involves removing an arthritic or injured joint and replacing it with a new one. The implant, also called a prosthesis, is typically made of metal or plastic and is molded to form a new hip or knee joint. In some cases, the joint is cemented to the bone to keep it attached. This procedure is often used for older individuals whose bones may be frail.

“If you're considering hip replacement surgery, you can expect the procedure to last between two and three hours,” explains Stephen Simpson, MD, an orthopedic surgeon at Nashoba Valley Medical Center. “The surgery generally requires a 10- to 12-inch incision. Knee replacement surgery typically involves an eight- to 12-inch incision. Depending on your activity level, most new joints may last 20 years or longer.”

To determine whether joint replacement surgery is right for you, contact your physician. To schedule an appointment with Drs. Harasimowicz or Simpson, call 978-784-9990.

*Source: “Total Knee and Hip Replacement Surgery Projections Show Meteoric Rise by 2030,” American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons

If aching and stiff joints cause constant pain, limit your ability to walk or climb stairs, and affect your quality of life, you may be a likely candidate for joint replacement surgery.

A Joint Effort

After joint replacement surgery, a patient typically participates in a rehabilitation program. At Nashoba Valley Medical Center, our team of highly skilled physical therapists work together with the orthopedic team to provide patients with coordinated care before, during and after joint replacement surgery.

After surgery, our physical therapists are onsite, at the hospital, to help patients get up and get moving quickly. This care continues in an outpatient setting after discharge. Patients participate in individualized treatment plans, which include exercises designed to strengthen the muscles in the hip or knee. Nashoba's physical therapists are dedicated to helping patients maximize range of motion, increase strength and function, and improve overall quality of life.

To meet our patient's needs we offer early morning and evening appointments at our convenient, onsite location. For more information about Nashoba Valley Medical Center's physical therapy services, call 978-784-9350.

