

TREATMENT

# Total Joint Replacement: Questions Patients Should Ask Their Surgeon

The goal of orthopaedic treatment is to relieve pain and restore function. In planning your treatment, your doctor will consider many things, including your age, activity level, and general health. If nonsurgical treatment methods, such as medication and physical therapy, do not relieve your symptoms, your doctor may recommend total joint replacement.

Your doctor and healthcare team will provide you with information to help you prepare for surgery. Never hesitate to ask questions. The following list of questions can help you in your discussions with your doctor before your surgery.

- If I do not have surgery, what is the risk?
- Can you give me any information on outcomes and complication rates?
- Is the skill and experience of the orthopaedic surgeon more important than the device or procedure?
- Do you routinely perform joint replacement as part of your practice?
- How many total hip or knee replacements does your hospital perform per year?
- How much pain can I expect, and how will it be managed in the hospital and after I go home?
- How long will I be in the hospital?
- Is physical therapy necessary after surgery?
- What will I be able to do/not do after my total joint replacement?
- How long will the joint replacement last, and what can I do to make it last as long as possible?

- What are the major and/or most frequent complications of surgery?
- Am I at greater risk for any complications?
- What can I do to decrease my risk of complications?
- What are the pros and cons of minimally invasive (mini-incision) surgery? Does it really make a meaningful difference in the result, or does it pose unnecessary risks?
- Who do I contact after surgery if I have a question or problem?

## **Last Reviewed**

September 2018

## **Contributed and/or Updated by**

[Jared R.H. Foran, MD](#)

## **Peer-Reviewed by**

[Stuart J. Fischer, MD](#)

AAOS does not endorse any treatments, procedures, products, or physicians referenced herein. This information is provided as an educational service and is not intended to serve as medical advice. Anyone seeking specific orthopaedic advice or assistance should consult his or her orthopaedic surgeon, or locate one in your area through the AAOS [Find an Orthopaedist](#) program on this website.