

# **KNEE REPLACEMENT**

**Surgery Can Help Relieve Pain** Knee replacement surgery may be recommended by your physician as treatment for pain relief. During the replacement procedure, the damaged knee joint is replaced with an artificial implant (called prosthesis).

## **Benefits of Knee Replacement**

- Reduces joint pain
- Increased leg strength
- Improved quality of life
- Easier movement

**A Damaged Knee** Movement suffers when parts of the knee are damaged. Cartilage starts to crack or wear away. Damage may keep increasing, since cartilage cannot repair itself. Stiffness is an early symptom, as the bones in the joint begin to rub, you're likely to feel pain

**Your Treatment Plan** The results of your exam and tests are used by your physician to form a treatment plan that is right for you. Depending on your age and the amount of damage, your physician may recommend replacing all or only part of the knee joint. A total knee replacement last many years, and can often be repeated if the first prosthesis wears out. Your physician may recommend delaying surgery if you are still fairly young. Medications or changes in lifestyle may help control your symptoms until the time is right for your knee replacement. If you are a patient with diabetes, Dr. Henry has a specialized plan of care for your knee replacement.

**Discuss Your Medications** To avoid problems during and after surgery, you may need to stop taking certain medications before your joint replacement. Some medications don't mix well with anesthesia. Others can increase bleeding. It is important that you provide your physician with a list of the medications you take – including over-the-counter ones such as aspirin and/or ibuprofen.

**Finish Dental Work** Finish any dental work that is underway, and have tooth and gum problems treated before surgery. If you don't, germs in your mouth could enter your bloodstream and infect your new joint. An infection is a serious complication. In some cases, the prosthesis would have to be removed to treat the infection.

**Risk and Complications** Possible risks and complication of knee replacement include.

- Reaction to anesthesia
- Blood clots
- Infection
- Dislocation of the joint or loosening of the prosthesis
- Damage to blood vessels, nerves, or bones
- Dislocation of the kneecap

During your Recovery Exercise is an important part of your recovery

**Build Muscle Strength** Strong muscles reduce the amount of force on your bones, and can help the joint last longer

*Quad Sets*

- Sit against the head of a bed. Place the leg with the new joint straight in front of you.
- Tighten the front leg muscles which pull the kneecap toward your thigh. Then press the back of your leg toward the ground
- Hold for a count of 5. Repeat as directed by your physician or therapist.

*Core Strengthening Exercises* improve movement in and out of chairs and beds. See the link to Dr. Henry's Basic Core Strengthening Program

**See Your Physician** It is important to see your physician for scheduled follow-up visits. Your sutures or staples will be taken out about 2 weeks after surgery.

**When to Call Your Physician**

- An increase in knee pain
- Pain or swelling in your calf or leg
- Unusual redness, heat, or drainage at the incision site
- Trouble breathing or chest pain
- Fever over 101° F

**Returning to Activity** Your rate of recovery will depend on the type of surgery. To build strength, walk every day, and try to do more each week. You may be ready to drive within weeks of surgery. Keep in mind, knee replacement is a major surgery. It may take a few months before you feel really good.

Maintaining Your New Knee An infection in your body could harm your new joint. Talk to your physician before scheduling medical or dental procedures. You may need to take antibiotics to prevent infection.