

Knee Replacement or Knee Arthroplasty

CAREGIVER
RESOURCE

Knee replacement surgery – also known as knee arthroplasty – can help relieve the client’s pain and restore function in severely diseased knee joints. Most people have knee replacement surgery to relieve severe pain caused by osteoarthritis. People who need knee replacement surgery usually have problems walking, climbing stairs and getting in and out of chairs. Some also have moderate or severe knee pain while resting.

Source: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/knee-replacement/basics/why-its-done/prc-20019202>
(Accessed 06.21.16)

During knee replacement surgery, a surgeon removes the damaged part of the joint and the surface of the bones; the surfaces are then shaped to hold a metal or plastic artificial joint. The artificial joint is attached to the thigh bone, shin and knee cap either with cement or a special material.

Risks of Knee Replacement

- **Blood clots:** can form in the leg veins after surgery. This can be dangerous because a piece of a clot can break off and travel to the lungs, heart or in some rare cases the brain. The client’s doctor may prescribe blood-thinning medications to reduce this risk.
- **Infections:** can occur at the site of the incision and in the deeper tissue near the new knee. Most infections are treated with antibiotics, but a major infection near the prosthesis may require surgery to remove and replace the prosthesis.
- **Joint failure risk:** with daily use, even the strongest metal and plastic parts eventually wear out. Joint failure risk is higher if you stress the joint with high-impact activities or excessive weight.

Role of a CAREGiverSM

- Follow the instructions from the client’s physician regarding treatment and physical activity.
- Encourage the client to do exercises prescribed by her physical therapist, if applicable.
- Assist the client with daily activities. The client should limit the use of stairs.
- Encourage the client to sit in a firm, straight-back chair. Recliners should not be used.
- Help provide a safe environment. If possible, remove all throw rugs and keep floors and rooms clutter free. Check the house for loose handrails or grab bars. If you have recommendations to modify the client’s house, contact the franchise office.
- Encourage the client to use an elevated toilet seat. This alleviates the need for a client to bend too far at the hips.
- Keep jumpy pets away from the client until she has healed completely.
- Recognize, report and record. Be the eyes and ears for the client in the home. Report any changes or concerns to the franchise office as soon as possible.

Source: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/knee-replacement/basics/how-you-prepare/prc-20019202>
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