

Total Hip Replacement

OS01 Lite - Expires end of January 2024



This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What is arthritis?

Arthritis is a group of conditions that cause damage to one or more joints.

Arthritis wears away the normal cartilage covering the surface of the joint and the bone underneath becomes damaged. This causes pain and stiffness in the joint, which can interfere with normal activities.

What are the benefits of surgery?

You should get less pain and be able to walk more easily.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

Simple painkillers such as paracetamol and anti-inflammatory painkillers such as ibuprofen can help control the pain of arthritis.

Using a walking stick on the opposite side to the affected hip can make walking easier, as can a small shoe-raise on the affected side.

Regular moderate exercise can help to reduce stiffness in your hip. Physiotherapy may help to strengthen weak muscles.

A steroid injection into your hip joint can sometimes reduce pain and stiffness for several months.

What will happen if I decide not to have the operation?

Arthritis of your hip usually, though not always, gets worse with time. Arthritis is not life-threatening in itself but it can be disabling.

Arthritis symptoms can be worse at some times than others, particularly when the weather is cold.

What does the operation involve?

Various anaesthetic techniques are possible.

The operation usually takes an hour to 90 minutes.

Your surgeon will make a cut on your hip and remove the damaged ball and socket of your hip. They will then insert an artificial joint made of metal, plastic, ceramic, or a combination of these materials. The implant is fixed into the bone using

acrylic cement or special coatings that bond directly to the bone.

How can I prepare myself for the operation?

If you smoke, stopping smoking now may reduce your risk of developing complications and will improve your long-term health.

Try to maintain a healthy weight. You have a higher risk of developing complications if you are overweight.

Regular exercise should help to prepare you for the operation, help you to recover and improve your long-term health. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Speak to the healthcare team about any vaccinations you might need to reduce your risk of serious illness while you recover. When you come into hospital, practise hand washing and wear a face covering when asked.

What complications can happen?

Some complications can be serious and even cause death.

General complications of any operation

- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Acute kidney injury
- Blood clot in your leg
- Blood clot in your lung
- Difficulty passing urine
- Chest infection
- Heart attack
- Stroke

Specific complications of this operation

- Damage to nerves around your hip
- Damage to blood vessels
- Split in the femur

- Leg length difference
- Infection in your hip
- Bone forming in muscles around your hip replacement
- Dislocation of your hip replacement
- Loosening without infection

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain
- Unsightly scarring of your skin

How soon will I recover?

You can go home when your pain is under control, you can get about safely, and any care you may need has been arranged.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Most people make a good recovery, have less pain, and can move about better. It is important to follow the advice the physiotherapist gives you about exercises to strengthen your hip muscles.

A hip replacement can wear out with time.

Summary

If you have severe pain, stiffness and disability, a hip replacement should reduce your pain and help you to walk more easily.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

Acknowledgements

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Stephen Milner (DM, FRCS (Tr & Orth))

Illustrator

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