

Preparing for Surgery



Preparing for your operation.

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What you're feeling

You may notice pain that flares up after you move your joint or at the end of the day. Many people find it hard to sleep on the side of the affected joint. You might feel stiffness when you first wake up in the morning. Simple tasks like reaching behind your back to fasten a bra or tucking in your shirt can become difficult.

Your surgeon knows that these symptoms are more than just numbers on an X-ray. We treat you as a whole person, not just your radiographic findings. This approach helps build trust and improves your outcome. While some patients feel their knowledge about joint replacement increases after a class, others may only see a modest change in understanding.

We want to prepare you for what comes next. A formal educational program can help lower how long you stay in the hospital after hip or knee replacement. We use proactive protocols to make sure your same-day discharge is safe and successful. If you have questions about pain, we may discuss video counseling to help lower your need for opioids in the first week after surgery.

What's actually happening

Your joint is like a machine that has worn down over time. Inside, the smooth coating on the bone ends, called cartilage, acts as a shock absorber. When this coating wears away, the bones rub together. This causes pain and stiffness. Your surgeon sees this on X-rays, but treats you as a person, not just a picture.

To help you prepare, your surgeon may use tools to explain what is happening. You might watch a video or look at a 3D model of your hip. These tools help you understand the problem before surgery. Some patients find that learning from others in a class helps them feel more ready. This can change how you expect your recovery to go.

Good preparation also helps your body heal faster. If you learn about pain medicine before surgery, you may need fewer opioids in the first week after your knee replacement. A formal education program can also help you leave the hospital sooner after a hip or knee operation. Your care team uses these plans to avoid problems when you go home the same day. This proactive approach keeps your experience safe and successful.

What we can do about it

You can start by managing your own pain and working with a physiotherapist. These steps aim to improve your movement and reduce discomfort before any procedure. While evidence for preoperative opioid education in hand surgery shows some benefit, the data is limited. For hip or knee replacement, a formal educational program can help lower your length of stay in the hospital. Your team will also use proactive office protocols to ensure a safe same-day discharge by anticipating potential problems.

Medical management involves pain medication, anti-inflammatories, and injections like cortisone, hyaluronic acid, or PRP. Preoperative video counseling can significantly decrease opioid consumption within the first week after total knee replacement. Classes can also modify your expectations of recovery from total hip or total knee replacement. However, knowledge about joint replacement increased only modestly for underserved patients in mission trips. Using 3D hip models for counseling does not appear to improve your understanding or satisfaction compared to standard CT imaging alone.

Surgery is considered when conservative care reaches its limit and daily life remains difficult. Your surgeon will discuss this option if your symptoms do not improve with the steps above. The operation replaces the damaged joint to restore function and relieve pain.

When to see someone

See your GP if you have persistent pain that does not improve with rest. Ask for a specialist review if you notice weakness, instability, or your joint locks and gives way. Seek help if symptoms interfere with your sleep or work, or if you experience sudden worsening. Your surgeon may use preoperative video counseling to help reduce opioid use in the first week after surgery. Formal education programs can also help lower your hospital stay for hip or knee replacement. These steps support a safe recovery and better understanding of your care.