

Joint Replacement Surgery: What Patients Should Know

(NAPSA)—Joint replacement surgery can help restore a person's mobility and quality of life and is becoming increasingly common across the United States. In fact, it is estimated that each year, more than three-quarters of a million Americans have joint replacement surgery for hips, knees, shoulders, fingers, ankles and elbows.

Of course, not every person with joint pain needs joint replacement surgery, and only a doctor can tell if you need an operation. But those considering surgery can find answers to many of their questions in a new booklet from the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) called "Joint Replacement Surgery: Information for Multicultural Communities." The booklet is available at no charge in English and Spanish. NIAMS is involved in supporting research into the causes, treatment and prevention of diseases of bones, joints, muscles and skin. Research contributing to the information in the booklet was funded by NIAMS. The easy-to-read guide explains what to expect with joint replacement surgery, including some of the possible risks and side effects of the procedure.

Here's a closer look at some of the facts and answers:

What Is Joint Replacement Surgery?

Joint replacement surgery is removing a damaged joint (where two or more bones come together, like the knee, hip and shoulder) and putting in a new one, which can be made of plastic, metal or both. It may be cemented into place or not cemented, so that your bone will grow into it. The surgery is usually done by an orthopedic surgeon.



A free booklet provides patients with an easy-to-understand look at what to expect with joint replacement surgery.

Do I Need To Have My Joint Replaced?

Joints can be damaged by arthritis and other diseases, injuries or other causes or simply wear away. This can cause pain, stiffness and swelling. Joint replacement is often the answer if you have constant pain and can't move the joint well. Replacing a joint can relieve pain and help you move and feel better.

What Happens After Surgery?

Joint replacement surgery is usually successful for 90 percent of patients who have it. With knee or hip surgery, you may be able to go home in three to five days. But for the elderly or those with additional disabilities, you may need to spend several weeks in an intermediate care facility before going home. Physical therapy can begin the day after surgery to help strengthen the muscles around the new joint and help you regain motion in the joint.

Learning More

You can order or view the NIAMS booklet about joint replacement surgery online and also find out more information about diseases of bones, joints, muscles and skin at www.niams.nih.gov. Additionally, you can order the free booklet by emailing NIAMSinfo@mail.nih.gov or calling (877) 22-NIAMS.