

Patient Information Sheet: Knee Arthroplasty

Knee arthroplasty, or knee replacement surgery, involves replacing the damaged parts of your knee joint with artificial (CobaltChrome and titanium) components. This procedure can significantly reduce knee pain and improve mobility and quality of life.

Risks of Surgery:

1. Infection:

Risk: Infection is a serious complication that can occur at the surgical site. Absolute risk for deep infection is 1%, and this will require repeat surgeries to remove the components, as well as prolonged hospital stay for antibiotics.

- Prevention:

- Skin Condition: It's important to treat skin conditions, such as rashes (especially between the toes), before surgery. These can be treated with medications and proper skin care to reduce the risk of infection.

- Blood Sugar Control: Keeping your diabetes well-managed is crucial. High blood sugar levels can increase the risk of infection and slow down healing.

- Good Hygiene: Maintaining good hygiene before and after surgery helps prevent infections. Follow the pre-operative bathing instructions and keep the surgical site clean and dry after the surgery.

2. Venous Thromboembolism (VTE):

Risk: Blood clots can form in the legs (deep vein thrombosis) and travel to the lungs (pulmonary embolism). A large clot may block the heart and cause death.

Prevention: You may be prescribed blood-thinning medications, and encouraged to mobilise as soon as possible after surgery to improve blood circulation.

3. Fractures:

Risk: The bones around the new hip joint can fracture during or after surgery.

Prevention: Optimisation of bone health, careful surgical technique and following weight-bearing guidelines post-surgery can minimize this risk.

4. Neurovascular Injury:

Risk: Nerves or blood vessels around the hip can be injured during surgery. Most common nerve injury manifests in a foot drop. This usually can resolve with observation, however there may be a need for surgery to be done around the foot to regain the strength around the foot.

The Popliteal artery is located at the back of the knee. There is a minimal risk of it getting injured (<0.1%), however if the circulation of the foot is compromised, it may end up with amputation.

Optimizing Your Surgery Outcome:

1. Optimise Skin Conditions:

- Treat any skin conditions, such as rashes, with prescribed medications.
- Follow skin care routines to keep the area around the surgical site healthy.
- Avoid scratching the skin around the surgical site, as well as the affected limb. Wet wounds may harbour bacteria, which can shift into the wound and components during surgery.

2. Optimise nutrition and manage Diabetes:

- If possible, encourage a diet high in protein and iron, which are essential components in the healing process.
- Keep blood sugar levels under control with the help of your healthcare team.
- Follow dietary recommendations and take medications as prescribed.

3. Maintain Good Hygiene:

- Follow pre-operative bathing instructions to reduce skin bacteria.
- Keep the surgical site clean and dry post-operatively.

4. Motivation and Exercise in Rehabilitation:

- Importance of Exercise: Regular exercise is essential for strengthening the muscles around your joint and improving your overall mobility.
- Stay Motivated: Set realistic goals and track your progress. Celebrate small achievements to stay motivated. A positive mindset is an important factor in ensuring good recovery.

What to Expect After Surgery:

You may stay in the hospital for a few days. Your surgeon will monitor your recovery and manage pain.

Rehabilitation: Physical therapy is crucial for recovery. It helps improve mobility and strengthens the muscles around your new hip joint.

Follow-Up: Regular follow-up visits are necessary to monitor your progress and address any concerns.

By understanding these risks and working together to optimize your health before surgery, we can help ensure a smoother recovery and a better outcome.

Questions:

