



SENIOR HEALTH

Total Joint Replacement

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Total joint replacement is meant to provide a better quality of life for people who suffer from chronic pain due to arthritis or osteoporosis. Arthritis can make the surface of a joint rough and worn, causing pain and often leading to muscle weakness and joint stiffness. The most frequently replaced joints are the hips and knees, but the ankles, shoulders, wrists, elbows, fingers and toes can also be replaced.

The joint implant may be held to the bone with a cement-like material. In the newest kind of joint replacement, a porous coating on the implant encourages the bone to grow to it, anchoring the implant in place without cement.

As with any major surgery, there's a risk of complications. Infection, pneumonia and the formation of blood clots in the veins are possible. The new joint dislocates in about one of every 100 cases. But it can often be corrected without reopening the wound. Loosening of the implant over time may also require further

surgery. The life of the new joint depends on a number of factors, including weight, activity level, age and bone strength. A newer joint implant has been proven to last at least 10 years. Cemented joints can last as long as 20 years.

WHEN IS IT NEEDED?

When severe pain that's associated with activity persists at night and interferes with daily activities and work, joint replacement might be the treatment of choice.

