

# Patient Information for Consent

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## OS01 Total Hip Replacement

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## Information about COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Hospitals have robust infection control procedures in place. However, you could still catch coronavirus either before you go to hospital or once you are there. If you have coronavirus at the time of your procedure, this could affect your recovery. It may increase your risk of pneumonia and in rare cases even death. The level of risk varies depending on factors such as age, weight, ethnicity and underlying health conditions. Your healthcare team may be able to tell you if these are higher or lower for you. Talk to your surgeon about the balance of risk between going ahead with your procedure and waiting until the pandemic is over (this could be many months).

Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> for up-to-date information.

## Information about your procedure

Following the Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, some operations have been delayed. As soon as the hospital confirms that it is safe, you will be offered a date. Your healthcare team can talk to you about the risks of having your procedure if you have coronavirus. It is then up to you to decide whether to go ahead or not. The benefits of the procedure, the alternatives and any complications that may happen are explained in this document. If you would rather delay or not have the procedure until you feel happy to go ahead, or if you want to cancel, tell your healthcare team.

If you decide to go ahead, you may need to self-isolate for a period of time beforehand (your healthcare team will confirm how long this will be). If you are not able to self-isolate, tell your healthcare team as soon as possible. You may need a coronavirus test a few days before the procedure. If your test is positive (meaning you have coronavirus), the procedure will be postponed until you have recovered.

Coronavirus spreads easily from person to person. The most common way that people catch it is by touching their face after they have touched anyone or anything that has the virus on it. Wash your hands with alcoholic gel or soap and water when you enter the hospital, at regular intervals after that, and when you move from one part of the hospital to another.

Even if you have had the first or both doses of a Covid vaccine, you will still need to practise social distancing, hand washing and wear a face covering when required.

If your healthcare team need to be close to you, they will wear personal protective equipment (PPE). If you can't hear what they are saying because of their PPE, ask them to repeat it until you can. Chairs and beds will be spaced apart. You may not be allowed visitors, or your visiting may be restricted.

Your surgery is important and the hospital and health professionals looking after you are well equipped to perform it in a safe and clean environment. Guidance about coronavirus may change quickly — your healthcare team will have the most up-to-date information.

## What is arthritis?

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

Your surgeon has recommended a total hip replacement operation. However, it is your decision to go ahead with the operation or not.

This document will give you information about the benefits and risks to help you to make an informed decision. If you have any questions that this document does not answer, it is important that you ask your surgeon or the healthcare team.

Once all your questions have been answered and you feel ready to go ahead with the procedure, you will be asked to sign the informed consent form. This is the final step in the decision-making process. However, you can still change your mind at any point before the procedure.

## How does arthritis happen?

The most common type of arthritis is osteoarthritis, where there is gradual wear and tear of a joint. For a few people this is a result of a previous problem or injury but usually it happens without a known cause.

Some other types of arthritis are associated with inflammation of the joints that can eventually lead to severe joint damage. The most common is rheumatoid arthritis.

Arthritis eventually 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. Check with your doctor before you take supplements.

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. If you are overweight, losing weight will help reduce the load on your hip.

A steroid injection into your hip joint can sometimes reduce pain and stiffness for several months. You may get side effects if you have injections too often.

All these measures become less effective if your arthritis gets worse and this is when your surgeon may recommend a hip replacement.



A total hip replacement

## 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?

If you are female, the healthcare team may ask you to have a pregnancy test as some procedures involve x-rays or medications that can be harmful to unborn babies. Sometimes the test does not show an early-stage pregnancy so let the healthcare team know if you could be pregnant.

The healthcare team will carry out a number of checks to make sure you have the operation you came in for and on the correct side. You can help by confirming to your surgeon and the healthcare team your name and the operation you are having.

Various anaesthetic techniques are possible. Your anaesthetist will discuss the options with you. You may also have injections of local anaesthetic to help with the pain after the operation.

You may be given antibiotics during the operation to reduce the risk of infection.

The operation usually takes an hour to 90 minutes.

There are many different types of hip replacement available and your surgeon will discuss the options with you.

Your surgeon will make a cut on the side of 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.

Your surgeon will close your skin with stitches or clips.

## What should I do about my medication?

Make sure your healthcare team knows about all the medication you take and follow their advice. This includes all blood-thinning medication as well as herbal and complementary remedies, dietary supplements, and medication you can buy over the counter.

## What can I do to help make the operation a success?

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.

You can reduce your risk of infection in a surgical wound.

- In the week before the operation, do not shave or wax the area where a cut is likely to be made.
- Try to have a bath or shower either the day before or on the day of the operation.
- Keep warm around the time of the operation. Let the healthcare team know if you feel cold.

## What complications can happen?

The healthcare team will try to reduce the risk of complications.

Any numbers which relate to risk are from studies of people who have had this operation. Your doctor may be able to tell you if the risk of a complication is higher or lower for you.

Some complications can be serious and even cause death (risk: 1 in 200 in the first 3 months). The risk depends on your age and how fit you are.

You should ask your doctor if there is anything you do not understand.

Your anaesthetist will be able to discuss with you the possible complications of having an anaesthetic.

## General complications of any operation

- Pain. The healthcare team will give you medication to control the pain and it is important that you take it as you are told so you can move about as advised.
- Bleeding during or after the operation (risk: 1 in 300). You may need a blood transfusion.
- Infection of the surgical site (wound). It is usually safe to shower after 2 days but you should check with the healthcare team. Keep your wound dry and covered. Let the healthcare team know if you get a high temperature, notice pus in your wound, or if your wound becomes red, sore or painful. An infection usually settles with antibiotics but you may need another operation.

- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication. The healthcare team is trained to detect and treat any reactions that might happen. Let your doctor know if you have any allergies or if you have reacted to any medication or tests in the past.
- Unsightly scarring of your skin, although hip-replacement wounds usually heal to a neat scar.
- Blood clot in your leg (deep-vein thrombosis – DVT) (risk: 1 in 40). This can cause pain, swelling or redness in your leg, or the veins near the surface of your leg to appear larger than normal. The healthcare team will assess your risk. They will encourage you to get out of bed soon after the operation and may give you injections, medication, or inflatable boots or special stockings to wear. Let the healthcare team know straightaway if you think you might have a DVT.
- Blood clot in your lung (pulmonary embolus), if a blood clot moves through your bloodstream to your lungs (risk: 1 in 250). Let the healthcare team know straightaway if you become short of breath, feel pain in your chest or upper back, or if you cough up blood. If you are at home, call an ambulance or go immediately to your nearest Emergency department.
- Difficulty passing urine. You may need a catheter (tube) in your bladder for 1 to 2 days.
- Chest infection. You may need antibiotics and physiotherapy.
- Heart attack (where part of the heart muscle dies) (risk: 1 in 200). A heart attack can sometimes cause death.
- Stroke (loss of brain function resulting from an interruption of the blood supply to your brain). A stroke can sometimes cause death.

### Specific complications of this operation

- Split in the femur when the stem of your hip replacement is inserted, if the bone is weak (risk: 1 in 50). Your surgeon may need to insert some wires around the femur, or use a different type of hip replacement.

- Infection in your hip, which can result in loosening and failure of your hip replacement (risk: 1 in 250). You will usually need one or more further operations to control the infection. If you get any kind of infection, including a dental infection, get it treated straightaway as the infection could spread to your hip.
- Damage to blood vessels around your hip, leading to loss of circulation to your leg and foot (risk: 1 in 1,000). You will need surgery straightaway to restore the blood flow.
- Loosening without infection. You may need another operation to do your hip replacement again (risk: 1 in 50 in the first 13 years).
- Damage to nerves around your hip, leading to weakness, numbness or pain in your leg or foot (risk: 1 in 100). This usually gets better but may be permanent.
- Bone forming in muscles around your hip replacement (heterotopic ossification) (risk: 1 in 25). This can cause loss of movement in your hip.
- Dislocation of your hip replacement (risk: 1 in 20 in the first 5 years). You may need another operation if it keeps on happening.
- Leg length difference. Your surgeon will try to make your legs the same length again but this is not always possible, especially if there is a large difference before the operation. You may need a shoe-raise.

## How soon will I recover?

### In hospital

After the operation you will be transferred to the recovery area and then to the ward.

You will usually have an x-ray to check the position of your hip replacement.

Good pain relief is important to help you to recover. If you are in pain, let the healthcare team know.

Getting out of bed and walking is an important part of your recovery. The physiotherapist will help you to start walking using crutches or a walking frame, usually the next day. They will teach you how to look after your new hip.

Your surgeon or the physiotherapist will tell you how much weight you can put on your leg.

Keep your wound dry for 4 to 5 days, and use a waterproof dressing when you have a bath or shower.

The healthcare team will tell you if you need to have any stitches or clips removed, or dressings changed.

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

If you are worried about anything, in hospital or at home, contact the healthcare team. They should be able to reassure you or identify and treat any complications.

## Returning to normal activities

To reduce the risk of a blood clot, make sure you carefully follow the instructions of the healthcare team if you have been given medication or need to wear special stockings.

The healthcare team will tell you when you can return to normal activities.

To reduce the risk of problems, it is important to look after your new hip as you are told. You may need to use a walking aid for a few weeks.

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.

Do not drive until you are confident about controlling your vehicle and always check your insurance policy and with your doctor.

## The future

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.

It is common for your leg to be swollen after a hip replacement. It can take up to a year for the swelling to go down.

An artificial hip may never feel quite the same as a normal hip and it is important to look after it in the long term.

A hip replacement can wear out with time. This depends on your body weight and how active you are. Eventually a worn hip replacement will need to be replaced. About 19 in 20 hip replacements will last 10 years.

## Summary

Arthritis of the hip usually happens without a known cause. For a few people it is a result of a previous hip injury or rheumatoid arthritis. If you have severe pain, stiffness and disability, a hip replacement should reduce your pain and help you to walk more easily.

Surgery is usually safe and effective but complications can happen. You need to know about them to help you to make an informed decision about surgery. Knowing about them will also help to detect and treat any problems early.

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.

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

### Acknowledgements

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

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