

**The surgical replacement of a joint is one of the greatest medical advances of our time.** Millions of Americans live with joint pain, and the number of times a joint replacement procedure is performed has skyrocketed since its introduction four decades ago. Current estimates are that more than 650,000 hip and knee replacement procedures are performed every year in the United States.

Once considered mainly a procedure for senior patients, it's more commonly performed among the middle-aged.

A great majority of joint replacement recipients report decreased pain, increased function, and enhanced quality of life. It's a complex procedure; only your doctor can determine if you need a joint replaced. About 10 percent of implants fail due to loosening, infection, dislocation, or patient-related factors and require a revision to remove the old implant and put in a new prosthesis. Still, current hip and knee replacements function at least 10 to 20 years in most patients.

## How Does A Physician Determine the Time is Right for Joint Replacement?

When medical treatment for your sore joints becomes less effective, you may need to consider joint replacement surgery. Your doctor can help you base your decision on your general medical condition and fitness for surgery, and how much the arthritis or trauma impacts your quality of life. A complete physical exam and X-rays will determine the actual cause of your pain and the extent of your joint damage.

## What Questions Should I Ask My Orthopedic Surgeon?

- If I do not have joint replacement, what are my risks?
- What are the most frequent and major complications?
- How long will I be in the hospital?
- What kind of pain will I experience after surgery, both in the hospital and at home? How will I manage that pain?
- What kind of rehabilitation is provided?
- What type of restrictions will I face after surgery?
- If you needed joint replacement, which device would you choose for yourself, and why?
- How many total joint replacements do you and the hospital do?

## How Can I Hold Off on Having a Joint Replaced?

Your physician can explain ways to minimize your need for surgical treatment. Non-operative treatment options may include:

- Arthritis medications
- Eliminating activities such as running, heavy lifting, and impact sports
- Losing weight
- Nutritional supplements that include glucosamine and chondroitin
- Joint injections

## Mercy Offers a Complete Range of Orthopedic Care

Mercy Iowa City and physicians from Steindler Orthopedic Clinic combine to offer the Iowa City region with a complete range of orthopedic services for people of all ages:

- + Inpatient and outpatient surgery (total joint replacement, sports medicine, shoulder surgery, spine surgery, hand surgery, and fracture repair)
- + Arthroscopic surgery of the knee, shoulder, wrist, and elbow
- + Emergency trauma care
- + Pain management
- + Physical, occupational, and other rehabilitation services from Progressive Rehabilitation Associates, LLC
- + A 16-bed skilled nursing facility for recovery if needed
- + Patient and family education