

Orthopaedics – Knee Replacement

Introduction

We are reviewing patients who have been waiting a long time to help us prioritise those in most urgent need. Please be assured we are doing our utmost to ensure you and your families get the treatment you require as soon as possible. If you used the NHS e-Referral Service to book your appointment it will have given you an indicative appointment and treatment waiting time.

This document will provide you with information on how you can support yourself whilst waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance and advice has been reviewed and approved by clinicians responsible for your care.

Guidance for Patients

A knee replacement is the most common type of operation to improve the symptoms of severe arthritis in the knee.

The knee joint is similar to a hinge, which means its main movements are bending (flexion) and straightening (extension). However, the joint also allows a little side to side and front to back gliding. It is made up of the end of the thigh bone (femur), top of the shin bone (tibia) and knee cap (patella).

These bones are held together with strong ligaments, tendons and muscles. In a healthy knee joint, the surfaces of the bones are covered in a smooth, slippery material called articular cartilage, enabling smooth, pain free movement.

In an arthritic joint, this cartilage becomes worn, exposing the bone underneath and making the joint surfaces roughened and deformed. This can make movement and walking painful. Often the joint will swell and the thigh muscles can become weak.

The pain can become severe enough to disrupt sleep and significantly reduce overall quality of life. A knee replacement substitutes the damaged bone surfaces with metal and plastic components.

The most common type of replacement is a “total knee replacement”. This involves replacing the end of the thigh and top of the shin typically with metal components. A plastic insert is then attached to the shin bone component and sometimes the back of the knee cap is resurfaced with a small plastic button. The components are cemented in place with antibiotic impregnated cement which creates a nice strong bond between the metal components and the bone.

Sometimes the arthritis is confined to one part of the knee. In this situation, your consultant may discuss the possibility of a ‘unicompartmental knee replacement’ (replacing the end of the thigh and top of the shin on the inner or outer part of your knee on one side) or a ‘patello femoral knee replacement’ (replacing the knee cap groove on the front of the thigh and the back of the knee cap). There is always a chance that you may undergo total knee replacement if the other parts of the knee appear more worn at the time of surgery. Your consultant will discuss the best option with you and select the most suitable knee replacement.

The following link will take you to our patient information leaflet on Knee Replacement
[Knee Replacement Link](#)

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

You may have been to see your GP and they advised that they were going to refer you to the hospital, but you haven't yet had an appointment through. Until you have received your appointment you will stay under the care of your GP. Your GP will be aware of direct access diagnostic waiting times and will only request diagnostics tests that will change the future management of your care.

If you no longer require your appointment please let us know as soon as possible as that will allow us time to offer an earlier appointment to another patient. If you do not have the phone number for the specialty you will be reviewed in but would like to cancel, change your appointment or speak to a staff member please call our switchboard number and they will be able to direct your call to the correct specialty.

Royal Derby Hospital Switchboard - 01332 340131

Queen's Hospital Burton Switchboard - 01283 566333

There are often things you can do and changes you can make that can help you to cope with your condition whilst you are waiting. The following links will give you some helpful information. Please visit

<https://www.uhdb.nhs.uk/osteoarthritis-oa-of-the-hip-and-knee> and
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/osteoarthritis/>

Try and stay as active as you can. Strengthening the muscles around your knees will help your recovery. If you can, continue to do gentle exercise, such as walking and swimming, in the weeks and months before your operation.

There may be aspects of your daily routine which make your joint symptoms worse. Consider whether there is a different way to do them for example, taking regular breaks, changing from standing to sitting positions to complete the activity.

Improving your general fitness through regular exercise, eating a healthy, balanced diet, and stopping smoking (if appropriate) prior to surgery can all help you to be better prepared and to recover more quickly.

The following links will give you information about health and fitness support which you can access in Derbyshire and Staffordshire.

- <https://www.livewellderby.co.uk/>
- <https://www.livelifebetterderbyshire.org.uk/home.aspx>
- <https://www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/staying-well-service>

Further links which may help you manage your condition whilst you await treatment;

- <https://www.patientaccess.com/> (Connect to your GP services online)
- <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>

At University Hospitals of Derby & Burton we appreciate that treatment is taking a lot longer during these challenging times. Please see the useful links below to further resources to support you whilst waiting for treatment;

Escape Pain - <https://escape-pain.org/>

The Escape-pain programme helps people with knee, hip and back pain. It is a group rehabilitation programme for people with chronic joint pain that integrates educational self-management and coping strategies with an exercise regimen individualised for each participant

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

"We Are Undefeatable" - <https://weareundefeatable.co.uk/ways-to-move/five-in-five>

"We Are Undefeatable" is a movement supporting people with a range of long term health conditions, developed by 16 leading health and social care charities and backed by expertise. Our purpose is to support and encourage finding ways to be active that work with each person's conditions, not against them.

Versus Arthritis - <https://www.versusarthritis.org/>

Versus Arthritis is a charity, especially geared towards helping individuals manage differing forms of arthritis. They have useful online exercise programmes especially designed for those with painful arthritic conditions that will help maintain flexibility. They also offer self-help tips for managing arthritic pain.

Moving Medicine -

https://central.movingmedicine.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/03/MSK_Patient_info_leaflet_2020.pdf

This will give you useful tips on getting moving

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you have an appointment, and you feel that your symptoms are worsening, then please call our switchboard numbers and you will be transferred to the orthopaedic team for further support and advice. If you are yet to receive your appointment, and you feel that your symptoms are worsening, then see your GP.

Symptoms to watch out for are

- Increasing pain in your knee, particularly at rest and if you start waking at night.
- Your pain relief is no longer having any effect.
- Your knee is changing shape, for example, bowing inwards or outwards.
- Your knee is becoming more unstable when you are walking.
- Your knee is becoming very stiff.

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

If you have severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999 immediately.

If you have an appointment, and you feel that your symptoms are worsening, then please call our switchboard numbers and you will be transferred to the orthopaedic team for further support and advice. If you are yet to receive your appointment, and you feel that your symptoms are worsening, then see your GP.

Contact Us

Any email enquiries can be sent to our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS);

uhdb.contactpalsderby@nhs.net

If you feel that the hospital clinical team haven't been able to resolve your concerns after you have spoken to them about your waiting time, you can speak to our dedicated PALS team, visit <https://www.uhdb.nhs.uk/patient-advice-and-liaison-service-pals/> for further details.