FAQ’s for Total Knee Replacement

1. How long does a knee replacement last?
   • Clinical research has shown a total knee replacement have a 98% survivorship and can last 20-25 years. The life of a total knee replacement largely depends on the patient’s age, weight, activity level and overall health. A knee replacement is a device which is subject to wear and tear?

2. Where will I go after discharge from the hospital?
   • In most cases patients are able go home directly from the hospital, occasionally patients require additional help following surgery and may go to a nursing home or an inpatient rehabilitation center for 3-7 days following surgery. The Doctor and hospital staff will assist you will arrangements if needed.

3. How long until I can drive a car?
   • You may drive your car once you have full control of your surgical leg. If you had surgery on your left leg and drive an automatic transmission car you may be able to drive as early as 2 weeks following surgery if you are not taking pain medications. If a knee replacement was performed on the right knee and/or you drive a manual transmission you may be able to drive at 4 to 6 weeks.

4. When can I return to work?
   • Your returning to work greatly depends on what type of work you do. Sit down jobs or office jobs you may be able to return as early between 4-6 weeks depending on your recovery. Jobs which require a lot of standing you may be able to return between 8-12 weeks. A job requiring heavy labor you are unable to return for at least 1 2weeks.

5. Will I need assistance at home following surgery?
   • Returning home directly from the hospital may require assistance with house cleaning, meal preparation, ect. depending on the progress you made in the hospital.

6. Will I need home physical therapy?
   • Following a total knee replacement patients do not require at home physical therapy but requires outpatient physical therapy 2-3 times a week for at least 4 weeks.

7. When will I be able to walk following surgery?
   • You will be walking the day following your surgery with the use of a cane or walker. You will walk with either a cane or walker for 2 – 6 weeks depending on your recovery.

8. When can I return to stair climbing?
   • The physical therapy department at the hospital will have you climbing stairs before you are discharged from the hospital. The speed in which you climb the stairs depends on your progress.

9. Do I need to donate my own blood?
   • Most patients do not require a blood transfusion following knee replacement. Occasionally a blood transfusion is required and you may donate your own blood.

10. What can I do to prepare for recovery?
    • We recommend 2 weeks of physical therapy prior to your knee replacement to strengthen your surrounding muscles.

11. How long will my incision be?
    • Replacement done utilizing a minimally invasive technique usually is performed through a 3-5 inch incision.
12. When should I have a knee replacement?
   - Your surgeon will determine if you are a candidate for total knee replacement through and x-ray and physical examination. It is your decision to schedule surgery based on your discomfort, pain, loss of quality of life.

13. Am I too old for a knee replacement?
   - A patient’s age is not the general concern when considering total knee replacement. Your primary care physician usually determines your ability to undergo a total knee replacement.

14. What are the risks and complications for knee replacement?
   - The risks involved with knee replacement are uncommon but can occur include but not limited to injuries to the nerves and blood vessels, loss of motion to the knee, stiffness to the knee, pulmonary embolism, thrombophlebitis, and failure of the prosthesis, fracture, patellar tendon rupture, and possible need for future surgery.

15. Do knee replacements fail?
   - Knee replacements can fail commonly due to loosening of the prosthesis from the bone and wearing of one or more of the components. If this were to occur, a revision surgery can be performed to correct most reasons of failure.

16. How long prior and following my knee replacement can I not go to the dentist?
   - We ask you do have any type of dental work 8 weeks prior and following a knee replacement to prevent an infection.

17. What medications do I need to discontinue prior to surgery?
   - Please discontinue the use of Aspirin or any product containing aspirin 10 days prior to surgery. This includes Plavix, Mobic, Celebrex, Motrin (Ibuprofen), Advil, Aleve, Vitamin E, Gingko Biloba, and Multivitamins. You may take Tylenol based products.

18. Is it normal to have numbness along the outside of my knee following surgery?
   - You may experience some numbness on the outside of your knee, this occurs when making the incision damaging nerves. This usually goes away with time.

19. Is it normal to have a clicking or a clunk within my knee?
   - The clicking or clunking some experience following a knee replacement is the artificial surfaces coming together.

20. Will my implant set of metal detectors?
   - If you have a knee replacement most likely your knee replacement is made out of metal which may set off metal detectors, we will supply you with a card for your wallet which states you have received a metal knee replacement.

21. When can I shower/bathe following my knee replacement?
   - Avoid showering or bathing until your incision is completely dry.

22. How long will I be in the hospital?
   - The average hospital stay for a knee replacement is 2-4 days.

23. How long is my surgery?
   - Your time in the operating room varies between 45 – 90 minutes followed by [ ] time in the recovery room.
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24. P.A.T. information
   • Approximately 2 weeks prior to surgery Pre Admission Testing will contact you for [ ].

25. What should I bring to the hospital?
   • Comfortable loose fitting clothing which easily stretches above the knee along with rubber soled shoes which are to be worn at physical therapy.

26. Will I take Aspirin or Coumadin following knee replacement?
   • After your surgery while you are still in the hospital your surgeon will direct you whether to take Coumadin or Aspirin and for how long?

27. Why Am I to take a Coumadin the evening before my surgery?
   • You are to take a single 5mg. of Coumadin the evening before your surgery after dinner to prevent a blood clot from forming during the operation.

28. Dental anti-biotic
   • Following a knee replacement we recommend along with the American Medical Association what you are to take antibiotics prior to any dental procedure indefinitely.

29. CPM Machine
   • A Continuous Passive Motion Machine is a device used following knee replacement to help you gain range of motion. Biomatrix will contact you within 2 weeks of surgery to make arrangements to get the CPM Machine to you.
   • The CPM Machine is to be used 3 times a day in 30-60 minutes increments. The starting motion is to be set at 45 degrees which is to increased 3-5 degrees with each use maxing out at 120 degrees. You will feel a mild stretch over the front of the knee when using the machine.

30. When can I resume taking all of my medications following knee replacement?
   • You may resume all of your medications upon discharge from the hospital unless indicated otherwise by your doctor.

31. Constipation following knee replacement?
   • Following your knee replacement the pain medications you are prescribed may cause constipation, if this is the case we often recommend the “Brown Bomber” to counter act the constipation.
     1 Oz. Milk of Magnesia
     4 Oz., Prune Juice
     Mix milk of magnesia and prune, microwave for 30 seconds and mix.
     Drink in the morning before breakfast or in the evening before dinner, this can be repeated after 6 hours if needed.

32. How often do I wear the Compression Stocking following knee replacement?
   • The compression stockings are to be worn during the day and may be taken off at night before going to bed. Continue this until your first postoperative visit back to the office.