

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN IT IS TIME FOR JOINT REPLACEMENT?

You are not alone

If you are experiencing joint pain, you are far from alone. This year, more than 800,000 Americans will undergo a hip or knee replacement, and that number is expected to jump to more than 3.5 million by 2030.



Joint pain can occur for a variety of reasons. The most widespread cause is osteoarthritis, the most common form of arthritic pain. It occurs when cartilage between the joints breaks down and allows bone ends to touch one another, resulting in a deep ache. Osteoarthritis affects more than twenty million Americans, and is most commonly found in weight bearing joints, which is why it is so often the main cause of hip and knee pain.



While most knee pain is due to arthritis, hip pain can come from other sources. Prior joint trauma and disease can contribute to hip and or knee pain. Another common source of hip pain is avascular necrosis, or death of the bone due to lack of blood supply. Hip pain can also be caused by a small fracture of the bones that make up the hip joint.

As a first line of defense against joint pain, physicians may recommend routine exercises and therapy to strengthen the joint, a change in diet or weight loss to relieve pressure on the joint, or anti-inflammatory medication. For knee pain, bracing or splinting may be another option to cope with frequent pain.

However, when joint pain becomes severe, performing daily activities is difficult, and temporary relief is no longer effective, joint replacement surgery may be the best solution.

Joint replacement is no longer an 'older person's' procedure. Traditionally, the most common joint replacement candidates have been between 60 and 80 years of age. However, patients are getting younger due to increasingly active lifestyles and a higher incidence of obesity. By 2016, more than half of all total joint replacement surgeries completed are expected to be performed on patients less than 65.

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To make an appointment with Dr. LaReau, please call: 630.323.6116

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What's new in total joint replacement

One of the newest and most effective advances in hip replacement is the direct anterior approach, which allows the surgeon to reach the hip from the front, as opposed to the side or posterior used in traditional hip replacement surgery. This helps replace the hip without detaching muscle from the pelvis or femur. Consequently, the important gluteal muscles, which play a key role in hip function, are less affected than with traditional hip replacement surgery.

What's new in knee replacement is the custom knee implant, gender-specific knee implant and computer navigation in surgery. Due to differences between male and female anatomy, implants are being slightly redesigned by some companies to fit each patient a little differently. The implants designed for females are either angled in another way or fit a little smaller than previous designs. This new innovation, however, does not bind patients into a specific type of implant. Sometimes, the knee implant for your gender is not the one that would fit your anatomy best. Your surgeon will know for sure.



The decision is yours

Making the decision to undergo a joint replacement should be done following a careful evaluation of your overall health, surgery risks, potential outcome and input from a highly experienced joint replacement specialist. However, the final decision is yours. Be sure to research joint replacement options using the internet and speak with at least two qualified orthopaedic surgeons.



Dr. Justin LaReau | *Surgeon, Hinsdale Orthopaedics*

Dr. Justin LaReau of Hinsdale Orthopaedics specializes in joint restoration and total replacement of the hip and knee. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan Medical School, and served as Chief Resident during his orthopaedic surgery residency at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. He held a fellowship in Adult Reconstructive Surgery at New England Baptist Hospital and another in Hip Preservation Surgery at the Children's Hospital of Boston. Now, he is an active member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, and has worked at Hinsdale Orthopaedics since 2010.

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