
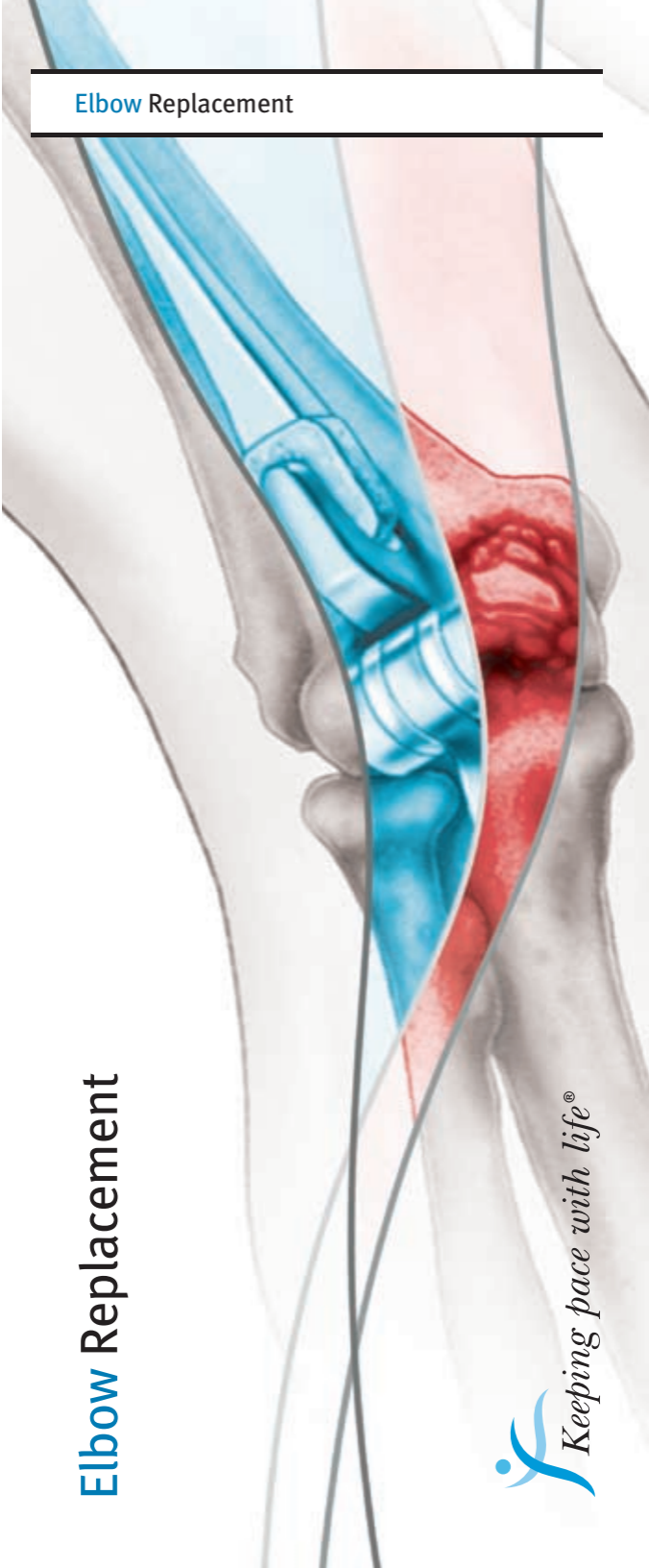


Elbow Replacement

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 *Keeping pace with life®*



RESTORING ARM MOVEMENT

If you suffer from a stiff, painful elbow, you probably avoid many of the activities that you used to enjoy. Even simple tasks like brushing your hair, dressing yourself, or carrying groceries can be difficult without full use of your elbow. Depending on the cause, there are many ways to treat the pain in your elbow. One way is through total elbow replacement surgery. Elbow replacement has reduced the pain and improved the lives of thousands of patients. In fact, more than 25,000 total elbow replacements have been performed in the United States alone. And nearly 2,000 new

questions you may have. If you have additional questions, or want more details about the points discussed here, do not hesitate to talk to your doctor.

WHY DOES MY ELBOW HURT?

Your elbow is a hinge joint made up of three bones. The lower arm, which consists of two bones, the ulna and the radius, meets the upper arm bone, the humerus. When you move your elbow, these three bones rub against each other. In a normal, healthy elbow joint, the bone surfaces that rub together are very smooth and covered with a tough protective tissue called cartilage. This

spongy layer of tissue prevents direct contact between these bones and allows the three bones to move without creating friction or wear on the bone surfaces.

However, when this cartilage is damaged or worn away, the bones rub directly together causing friction, pain and, eventually, deterioration of the bone surfaces. The most common causes of damage to cartilage are the

then connected at the ends by a metal pin which fits into a plastic bearing. This bearing will allow you to bend your elbow without allowing the arthritic bones to contact each other.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF I SHOULD HAVE ELBOW REPLACEMENT?

Your orthopaedic surgeon will perform a very thorough examination of your elbow. This will include a check of the muscles and tendons to determine how much strength and range of movement you have. Your surgeon will also ask you many

questions to determine your medical history. For example, you will be asked to describe your pain and how you have treated this pain in the past. You will also be asked about other joint problems, and about injuries, infections, and other disorders you have experienced in your life that may have affected your elbow. Your surgeon will also want to know what medications you are taking. Finally, your surgeon will take x-rays, which will be used to further assess the condition of your elbow joint. If you decide on total elbow replacement surgery, these images will also be used to help your surgeon

mine whether you are a candidate for total elbow replacement. Although widely practiced, total elbow replacement is a major surgical procedure and should only be considered when all other treatment methods have failed. There are more conservative alternatives which you and your surgeon may want to consider. These include medications or injections for pain and inflammation, physical therapy, or other types of surgery. The final decision about whether or not to have total elbow

replacement surgery will be yours, so you will want to understand the risks involved. There are potential complications both during and after surgery. Generally, these include infection, blood clots, pneumonia, implant loosening, and nerve damage. Your surgeon can answer your specific questions about these risks.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO HAVE ELBOW REPLACEMENT SURGERY?

Before Surgery

If you and your surgeon decide that

patients undergo this surgery every year. The first modern total elbow replacement surgery was performed in 1971. Since then, the implants and the techniques have steadily improved. Although nobody can guarantee a perfect outcome for you, elbow replacement can lead to less pain, greater strength, and better movement in the elbow. The decision to have total elbow replacement is not an easy one to make. There are many factors to consider, and after careful consultation with your doctor and loved ones, only you can make the final decision. This flyer will help answer some of the

various types of arthritis. There is no medication or treatment that will make damaged cartilage grow back.

WHAT IS TOTAL ELBOW REPLACEMENT?

In total elbow replacement surgery, the damaged parts of the bones that grind together are replaced with metal and plastic implants. Using special, precision instruments, your surgeon will remove the damaged portions of the ulna and humerus. The replacement parts will then be fixed into place. The replacement parts consist of two long metal stems that fit down into the shafts of the bones. The two stems are

select the best type and size of artificial elbow.

Based on this examination, your surgeon will deter-

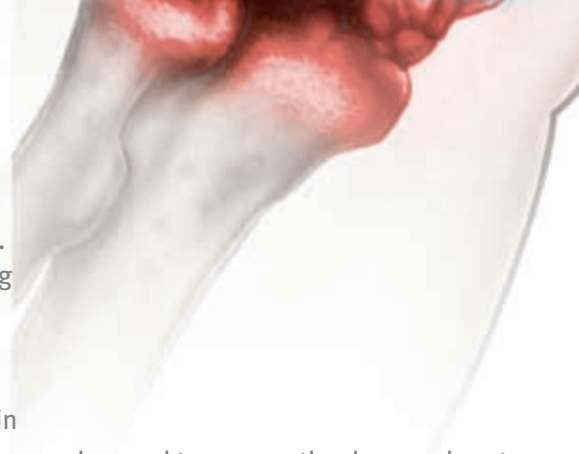


total elbow replacement is right for you, a date will be scheduled for your surgery. Several things may be necessary to prepare for surgery. For example, your surgeon might ask you to have a physical examination by your primary care physician.



During Surgery

On the day of surgery, a small tube (intravenous line) will be inserted into your arm. This tube will be used to administer fluids, antibiotics, and other medication during your surgery. You will then be taken to the operating room and given anesthesia. After the anesthesia takes effect, your elbow will be scrubbed and sterilized with a special solution. The surgery will begin with an incision over your elbow that will expose the joint. When the bones are fully visible to the surgeon, special precision guides and instruments will



be used to remove the damaged parts of the bones and shape the bones to accept the implants. The two implants are secured to the bones by using a

special bone cement. The implants are then connected with a pin, creating a hinge. It might also be necessary to adjust the ligaments that surround the elbow in order to achieve the best possible elbow function. When the surgeon is satisfied with the fit and function of the implants, the incision will be closed. A sterile bandage and ice pack will then be applied, and you will be taken to the recovery room, where you will be closely monitored. Your surgery will likely take between one and three hours, depending on your individual circumstances.

Immediately After Surgery

As your anesthesia wears off, you will slowly regain consciousness. A nurse will be with you, and may encourage you to cough or breathe deeply to help clear your lungs. You will also be given pain medication. Your arm will be immobilized in a splint. When you are fully awake and stable, you will be taken to your hospital room. Your elbow will remain swollen and tender for a few days.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?

When you are back in your hospital room, your nurses will check your dressing and give you pain medication as needed. Your arm will be elevated, and your hand and arm will be checked frequently. You may be asked to sit on the edge of your bed or even get out of bed and take a few steps.

Soon after your surgery, you may begin a gentle exercise and rehabilitation program with your physical therapist. This program will be designed specifically for you, and will help you regain strength and range of movement in your elbow.

You will be discharged after your surgeon determines that you have recovered sufficiently. You can expect to stay in the hospital anywhere from one to three days after your surgery, depending on your individual circumstances. Your bandages may be removed before you leave the hospital, but your stitches will probably not be removed for 10 to 14 days after surgery. At home, you will need to continue your exercises. Your physical therapist will instruct you about proper home care, and may continue to work with you. Successful total elbow replacement may relieve your pain and stiffness,

and may allow you to resume some of your normal daily activities, as instructed by your doctor. But even after you have fully recovered from your surgery, you will still have some restrictions. Normal daily activities for elbow replacement patients do not include contact sports or activities that put excessive strain on your elbow. You should not push or pull forcefully with the operated arm. Your surgeon will tell you the maximum weight you should try to pick up. Although your artificial elbow can be replaced, a second implant is seldom as effective as the first.



**For more information call:
1-877-447-5634
or visit our website at:
www.pacewithlife.com**

This flyer is intended to provide an overview of elbow replacement surgery. It is not intended to promote elbow replacement surgery or provide instructions for preoperative preparations or postoperative recovery.



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