

The medical minute: Hip and knee joint arthroplasty

3 November 2010

Hip and knee replacements are among the most reliable and effective surgeries performed today. Patients with arthritis can expect excellent pain relief with a low risk of complications. Most current hip and knee replacement systems have proven track records of longer than 10 years. When an experienced surgeon uses a proven implant with standard surgical techniques, at least 80 percent of implants will last more than 20 years.

The past 10 years have seen many changes in implant design and surgical techniques. These changes have been introduced in an effort to improve issues such as recovery time and implant durability. Few of these changes have actually led to improved results. Some of the changes have created significant new problems.

When considering new technology, [surgeons](#) adopt new techniques and implants at different rates and for different reasons. Patients should get involved in the decision to use new technology by asking questions. They should ask how long the technique has been available and what the track record is; what problem the surgeon is addressing with the new technique and if any other problems might be created. Most importantly, patients should ask their surgeon about his level of training and his experience level with any new technique.

It is not always reasonable to assume that new is better. Patients should become educated consumers and ask questions. An [implant](#) with an established track record in the hands of an experienced surgeon is the best bet when the goal is pain relief, return to function, and long-term durability.

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

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