

## Knee Arthritis and Knee Replacement Surgery

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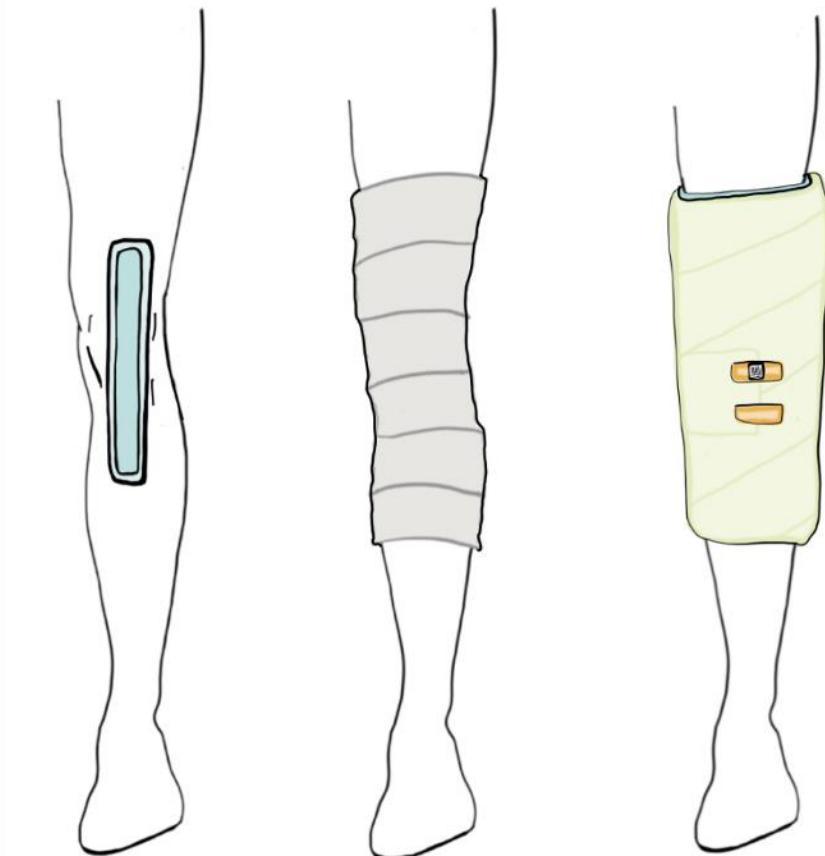
Dr Jarrad Stevens is a fellowship trained knee replacement surgeon in Melbourne who regularly assess patients for knee conditions and can recommend knee surgery when required.

Knee arthritis causes significant problems for many people. Knee joint replacement is a good surgical solution for people who cannot find relief for their arthritis by using other treatments.

### What to Expect after Surgery:

Once you have had your knee replacement, you may be able to begin to move the hip, ankle and knee under the instruction of Dr Stevens. Hospital physiotherapists will aim to safely have you mobilising after your surgery. This is important for your knee and general health.

A dressing will be placed over the knee following surgery. As the tissue and bone heal, a small amount of blood may appear on the dressings. This is normal. Sometimes, replacing the bandage is required to reinforce any areas that continue to bleed.



Elevate the leg for the first few days following surgery. You may be placed on blood thinning medications such as aspirin to help reduce the risk of clots.

**Discharge home:** After your surgery you will stay in hospital overnight and potentially for a few days. You will be discharged with pain relief tablets. If you need longer to safely walk, rehabilitation can be organised.

**Pain relief:** After surgery it is normal to have some pain or discomfort. The amount of surgery you have had will influence how much pain you can expect and how long you will need pain relief for. You will be given pain relief tablets to take home with you when you leave the hospital. Take these over the next week or so as you need.

**Looking after the Dressing:** You will need to keep the dressing clean and dry for two weeks.

**Movement after surgery:** You can move your foot, ankle, knee and hip straight away after surgery. Your hip will slowly be able to bend in the days that follow your operation. You may experience some pain in the weeks following surgery. You will need crutches or a frame to walk after surgery.

It is a good idea to keep moving even after your surgery, it helps your blood circulation and stops your body getting too weak. Avoid any strenuous activity for the first 2 weeks, but gentle movement and walking with your crutches is advised.

#### **Wound review:**

After 2 weeks you will have an appointment with Dr Stevens to have your wound checked, any stitches will be removed. Dr Stevens will then give you advice on exercises and physiotherapy.

**Driving:** You cannot drive until you have had your first review appointment with Dr Stevens. He will give you an indication then when you are likely to be able to drive again

**Returning to work:** This depends on the type of work you do. Most surgeries will need 4-6 weeks off work, some will require longer, especially if you have a manual job.

A knee replacement operation is major surgery. Despite excellent results there are risks associated with this procedure. Fracture, dislocation, infection and damage to nerve or blood vessels are some of the more significant risks. Dr Stevens will discuss with you the risks of surgery.

In general, patients who have knee replacement surgery have relief from their symptoms of arthritis and good movement of the knee. This normally means they can get back to doing the activities they enjoy. Ongoing pain, stiffness and dissatisfaction may result from knee replacement surgery – despite a good technical outcome.

Each person will recover from knee surgery in a different way. Some people will have little symptoms and good movement soon after surgery. Other patients may take months for the knee to function at its best. This is due to many factors. Age, the type of knee replacement, the reason for the knee replacement, general health and other genetic conditions will all play a role.

Partial knee replacements typically take 2 or 3 months to fully recover from. Full knee replacements normally take longer. Although the pain may subside early, swelling and tightness may take longer to settle.

A small number of patients will have difficulty bending the knee in the first 6-8 weeks following surgery. If your knee replacement is not bending beyond 90 degrees at this stage, Dr Stevens may discuss bending the knee for you under an anaesthetic to help it move more.

- ✚ Fever
- ✚ Heavy bleeding or ooze from the wound
- ✚ Increased swelling and redness around the surgery site
- ✚ Pain in the calf muscles or difficulty breathing

If you have any of these problems, please call Dr Stevens or his rooms on **03 5752 5020**