

[H1] Have joint pain? Timely replacement surgery can help

Lingering pain in your knee or hip could mean you have arthritis. If the discomfort is so great you rely on a cane or give up an active lifestyle, you may need a joint replacement.

If you have a confirmed arthritis diagnosis, joint replacement surgery can reduce your pain and get back to your daily routine. Having surgery before your symptoms become severe can help you avoid more damage to your joint. [Dinesh Thawrani, MD](#), an orthopedic surgeon with The Christ Hospital Physicians Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine, explains [what](#) joint replacement surgery [is](#) and what could happen if you delay the procedure.

[H2] What is joint replacement surgery?

[During joint replacement surgery](#), also called arthroplasty, a [surgeon](#) removes all or part of your damaged or injured joint (usually your knee or hip) and replaces it with a new artificial joint. This operation can reduce pain, stiffness, swelling and instability when other treatments like steroid injections and over-the-counter pain relievers don't work. It can also improve your range of motion.

Despite these benefits, though, joint replacement surgery isn't an urgent need.

"Nobody has to have a joint replacement. It's a surgery done to improve your quality of life," Dr. Thawrani says. "It's not like a cardiac procedure you have after a heart attack. But if you can't do the activities of daily living properly or must depend on some type of support to walk, you should think about having your joint replaced."

[H2] Timely surgery for better outcomes

Joint replacement surgery [is safe](#), but it's still an operation. Fear of the procedure is the main reason why some people choose to delay treatment, Dr. Thawrani says. But putting off the surgery does have consequences, [including the following](#):

- **Additional health problems:** Decreased activity can lead to weaker muscles and weight gain. Over time, you may be at an increased risk of diabetes or heart problems.
- **Poor emotional and mental well-being:** Research links chronic pain to depression and anxiety. You're also more likely to experience depression or sadness when pain limits your activities or makes it harder for you to leave the house.
- **More damage:** Over time, the ligaments and bones in your joint sustain more damage. Your ligaments can stretch out, and your bones may wear down. As a result, you may become more dependent on walking aids. If you wait for surgery, the procedure may be more complicated and require more specialized equipment. [You will also have a lower-quality outcome from your surgery.](#)
- **Secondary pain:** To limit your joint pain, you may compensate or change the way you move. Doing [so](#) may decrease your joint discomfort, but it can lead to pain elsewhere. For example, your hip may feel better if you alter the way you walk, but your back could start to hurt.
- **Worse pain:** Arthritis is a progressive condition with symptoms that get worse over time. Your pain will get more severe the longer you wait.

[H2] Advanced joint replacement care

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According to Dr. Thawrani, fear isn't the only reason some people avoid joint replacement surgery. You may delay because you're worried the implant won't last or that your recovery will take too long. Advancements over the past decade have addressed those concerns.

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"Nowadays, the implants used in joint replacements commonly last between 25 and 30 years," he says. "It's possible that someone who gets a joint replacement may only need to have one operation."

In addition, whenever possible, surgeons use minimally invasive techniques to perform joint replacements. As a result, our providers can help you stand and walk within a few hours after surgery. You may be able to leave the hospital the same day to recover at home.

"Most of our patients use a walker for a few weeks at most," Dr. Thawrani says. "A full recovery takes a long time. But within a month, most people bounce back and are doing most of their routine activities."

[H2] Convenient, comprehensive care

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As the regional joint replacement leader, The Christ Hospital treats the largest volume of patients seeking these surgeries. Together with our sports medicine, physical medicine and rehabilitation specialists, we offer next-day appointments to deliver the care you need as quickly as possible.

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Our surgeons are experts in performing the full range of joint replacement procedures, including standard partial, total and revision (corrective) replacements. We're also the only hospital in the area that offers anterior-approach hip replacement. This minimally invasive technique reduces blood loss, pain and the risk of dislocation. It also protects your muscles and offers faster recovery.

In addition, our surgeons work with a multidisciplinary team to deliver the highest quality care, most comprehensive care.

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"Along with our surgeons, we have a great team of primary care physicians, anesthesiologists, physical therapists, post-operative experts and in-house exercise specialists who work together to provide care under the same roof," Dr. Thawrani says. "We also have every high-tech delegation and robotic system to perform the most appropriate surgery on every patient."

Ultimately, Dr. Thawrani says, if you have confirmed arthritis and joint pain, there's no sweet spot for when you should get a replacement. However, having surgery sooner can limit damage to your joint, reduce your discomfort and help you recapture your active lifestyle.

"There is no 'too early,' and there's no 'too late' when it comes to a joint replacement. If someone has severe knee or hip pain from diagnosed arthritis and it hasn't improved with more conservative treatments, they are a candidate for a joint replacement," he says. "Our expert team at Christ Hospital is ready to help them."

[Dinesh Thawrani, MD](#), is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon with The Christ Hospital Physicians - Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine. Dr. Thawrani specializes in knee and hip replacement, fracture care and treating knee and hip arthritis. He is a member of the American College of Surgeons and has published studies in the Journal of Bone & Joint Surgery, the Journal of American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research.

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