

FAQ's

1. What is a Total Hip Replacement?

A total hip replacement is a procedure in which the surgeon removes a painful hip joint and replaces it with an artificial joint (prosthesis) specially designed for this purpose.

2. What is Total Knee Replacement?

A total knee replacement is a procedure in which the surgeon removes a painful knee joint and replaces it with an artificial one (prosthesis) specially designed for this purpose.

3. Do you only treat knees, hips and shoulders?

The practice focuses primarily on hip and knee surgeries, which include complete replacements and revisions. Dr. Lavernia also performs shoulder repair and replacement and several types of fracture surgeries.

4. How long is recuperation from a hip or a knee replacement?

Recovery varies with each person. Most patients will use a walker for four weeks after the surgery. Patients gradually increase their activities over the first 6 weeks after surgery. Impact loading sports, such as tennis and jogging, are not recommended.

After discharge, there is usually no need for a nursing home or rehabilitation unit.

5. Are there complications associated with knee or hip replacements?

As with any surgery, there are risks of complications. However, complications after knee or hip replacement are not frequent. Possible complications can include infections, blood clots, damage to nearby blood vessels and nerves, reactions to the anesthesia, and thigh pain, among others.

6. Who should have a knee or hip replacement?

Patients that have significant pain and impediment due to their hip or knee. When knee or hip pain severely limits your ability to walk, work or perform even simple activities, knee or hip replacement should be considered.

7. Is there an alternative to replacement?

A thorough evaluation of your joint condition has to be made prior to treatment. Knee or hip replacement is only recommended after trying out pills, injections and on occasion, physical therapy. Arthroscopic surgery is not beneficial once arthritis is

advanced. Also, it is not likely that anti-inflammatory drugs or cortisone injections will give you the same long-term relief as either a knee or hip replacement.

8. What is osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis, also known as degenerative joint disease, is the most common form of arthritis. In this disorder, the affected joint experiences a progressive loss of cartilage, the slippery material that cushions the ends of bones. As a result, the bone beneath the cartilage undergoes changes that lead to bony overgrowth. The tissue that lines the joint can become inflamed, the ligaments can loosen, and the associated muscles weaken. The patient then experiences pain when the joint is used.

9. Can osteoarthritis be resolved with medical therapy?

In the early stages of arthritis, successful alternative treatments may include medication, exercise and injections. However, since anti-inflammatory medications and cortisone injections do not change the progression of the disease, these conservative options eventually become ineffective and surgery is required. Joint replacement is a long-term answer for pain relief and returning to an active lifestyle.

10. What happens when joint replacements wear out?

Today, most artificial joints last 25 to 30 years under normal use. However, they can wear out sooner if subjected to impact loading. When a replaced joint wears out, loosens or develops a problem, it can often be re-replaced.

11. What materials are used for the arthroplasty?

In general, all joint replacements use a combination of materials. Most of the materials used today have been around for over 50 years. These generally include a cobalt chrome alloy, which is a high strength hard alloy. Another metal that is commonly used is titanium which is used as an alloy with aluminum and vanadium. An ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene plastic is also utilized in joint replacement. Recent improvements, both in the type of plastic used, as well as, in the processing of the plastic, have resulted in a significant reduction in the wear of the component.

12. What causes osteoarthritis?

Many experts now believe that osteoarthritis is a disorder that results from a combination of heredity, ambient, use, and diet sometimes coupled with injuries to the joint. In spite of years of research, there is no simple answer to this question. Many factors probably cause the initial cartilage damage that sets off the destructive process. It remains unknown why

particular joints are affected by osteoarthritis (OA) if they have not suffered any previous injury or disease.

13. Can I have surgery on both knees at the same time?

This can be done. However, in most cases, it is safer to stage the surgeries at least 4 weeks apart to allow the patient to recover and to minimize the complications.

14. What is the recovery time for most procedures?

Hospital stay is about 1 to 2 days, depending on how fast your knee or hip heals. When you leave the hospital, most patients go home. At home, the physical therapist will visit you for personalized therapy plan. Your therapist will review your exercise program, continue working with you on your precautions, and suggest safety tips. The visiting nurse or therapist will suggest ways to make your home environment safe.

15. Will my hip or knee replacement set off the metal detectors at the airport and governmental buildings?

Most likely, yes. Current technology will detect these very often. We do offer cards to notify officials that you are a patient who has an implanted metallic device. However, these cards and other materials we provide can be easily counterfeited therefore most officials will disregard these and use the metal detecting wand over the site of the surgery to ensure that there is no other metallic device in that area other than the joint replacement.

16. How long has Dr. Carlos Lavernia been in practice?

He's been practicing for more than 25 years as an orthopedic surgeon.

17. Is he a board-certified Orthopedic Surgeon?

Dr. Lavernia is board certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery and also is a Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopedics and the American College of Surgeons.

18. Do all surgeries require general anesthesia?

The anesthesia provided will depend on the patient's preference and the anesthesiologist's recommendation. We have an experienced team for local and regional block anesthesia. Your surgical anesthesia will be discussed in detail during your pre-operative visit.