



## Is It Time To Consider Joint Surgery?

Every individual is different when it comes to pain tolerance and ability to deal with the limitations of ailing joints. When non-surgical treatments don't work and inflammation, swelling and stiffness do not improve with rest and medication, it may be time to consider surgery. These questions may help you recognize if it's time to talk with your doctor about your joint replacement options.

### **Can I Live With the Pain?**

If chronic pain is affecting your daily life and you need medication to get through the day, it might be time to consider joint replacement.

### **Are Pain and Stiffness Worse Than a Year Ago?**

You feel increasing pain with both movement and at rest and it's getting harder to climb stairs, get into cars or do activities around the house.

### **Have I Given Up on Activities I Enjoy Because of My Pain?**

You find it harder and harder to get out of the house to enjoy recreational activities, dine or shop with friends. You are canceling more plans because of your discomfort.

### **Have I Explored All of the Treatment Options Available?**

Before you decide to have surgery, you will need to have an X-ray to confirm that you have joint damage. Additionally, you should have exhausted other conservative options such as medications, joint injections, physical therapy or other complementary remedies.

### **How Will Surgery Improve My Condition?**

Your doctor can give you an idea of the level of improvement you can expect after joint surgery. The outcome will depend on the type of surgery, the severity of the arthritis, your overall health and your ability to closely follow post-surgery instructions. You may need to lose weight, stop smoking or make other changes to achieve the full benefits of surgery.

### **Is My Overall Health Well Enough for Surgery?**

Your joints may be ready for surgery, but is the rest of you? Any other health conditions need to be well managed. Your overall health plays an important role in the healing and recovery process.

### **Am I Prepared for the Recovery Process?**

Joint replacement is considered a major surgery. Recovery requires a commitment to weeks of post-surgery rehabilitation to regain muscle strength, range of motion and good mobility. You will need to be committed to following your post-surgery program to recover fully.

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## Does My Health Insurance Cover the Costs of Joint Surgery and Recovery?

All insurance plans are different. Make sure you know what your insurance plan will cover, including things you may or may not need, like home care services, durable medical equipment and outpatient physical therapy. Know your out-of-pocket costs and make sure you are able to afford those expenses.

## Will I be Able to Take the Necessary Time Off?

Recovery from joint surgery can take up to six weeks, or even longer. You should expect to be out of work for the first couple of weeks, or longer, depending on the type of job. Check with your employer to make sure you can take the time off or make arrangements to work from home.

## Do I Have a Support System in Place to Help During my Recovery?

Post-surgery recovery is not something you can do alone. You will need help at home after surgery. If you live alone and don't have someone who can assist you, you may need a short stay in a nursing/rehabilitation facility or hired help at home until you are independent. For at least a few weeks, you'll likely need some assistance getting dressed, preparing meals, changing bandages and getting around in your home.

## Taking the Next Step

It's important that you talk to an orthopaedic surgeon so you understand what to expect before, during and after joint surgery. You may want to talk with other individuals who have had joint surgery to get a first-hand idea of what to expect.

Grand View Health and Upper Bucks Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine are committed to excellence in joint replacement care through Grand View's Joint Replacement Center. The center is dedicated to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases and injuries of the musculoskeletal system, which includes joints, bones, tendons, muscles and nerves.

### For More Information:

GVH Joint Replacement Center  
**215-453-4162**  
[www.gvh.org](http://www.gvh.org)

Upper Bucks Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine  
**214-257-3700**  
[www.uboanet.com](http://www.uboanet.com)

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