

Hip Replacement: Before Your Surgery

The hip joint allows you to move your leg smoothly. The joint connects the hip bone to the thighbone. Osteoarthritis is the most common reason for hip replacement. With osteoarthritis, the protective surface called cartilage—the stuff that protects and cushions the joint—breaks down.

As it breaks down, the bony surfaces of the joint rub against each other, which causes damage and pain. Hip replacement surgery can help treat that damage and pain by replacing the parts of the hip with new metal and plastic parts.

Here's how hip replacement surgery is done. Before and during the surgery, you will get medicine so you won't feel any pain. Your doctor will make incisions near your hip. The doctor will separate the hip bone from the thighbone.

And then cartilage and bone will be removed from the hip socket. A new hip socket will be put into your hip bone. The new hip socket has a special plastic cup that works like cartilage to help the joint move easily.

The doctor will also remove the head and neck of the thighbone. And a new head and neck will be placed into your thighbone. The new head of the thighbone will then be placed into the new hip socket.

To finish the surgery, your incisions will be closed with a bandage and stitches, staples, skin glue, or tape strips. Before the surgery, tell your doctor about all the medicines and natural health products you take, especially blood thinners, like aspirin.

Some can raise the risk of bleeding or cause problems with anesthesia. Your doctor will tell you which medicines to take or stop before surgery. And follow your doctor's directions for preparing for your surgery, including when you should stop eating and drinking.

Bring your photo ID, health insurance card, and any paperwork your hospital may have asked for. You won't be able or allowed to drive after your surgery. Be sure you have an adult friend or family member who can drive you home.

And you will need someone to help you at home for a few days or weeks or until you have more energy and can move around better. Healing takes time. And recovery has many steps, including time in the hospital, time at home, and physical therapy.

Everyone heals at their own pace. But it can help when you know what to expect. And remember, be kind to yourself.