



## DR. DARIA SINGH

Head of Department of Orthopedic Surgery and Joint Replacement Program  
at Marengo CIMS Hospital, Ahmedabad

### UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF PATIENT COMPLIANCE TO POST-OPERATIVE CARE FOLLOWING A PRIMARY TOTAL KNEE REPLACEMENT SURGERY

The knee joint comprises three bones namely the femur, tibia, and patella. The bones are covered with a smooth layer called cartilage that helps them move easily without rubbing together. A healthy knee joint is supported by ligaments that hold the bones together and keep your knee stable. There are also small cushions called menisci that help absorb shocks and keep your knee steady.

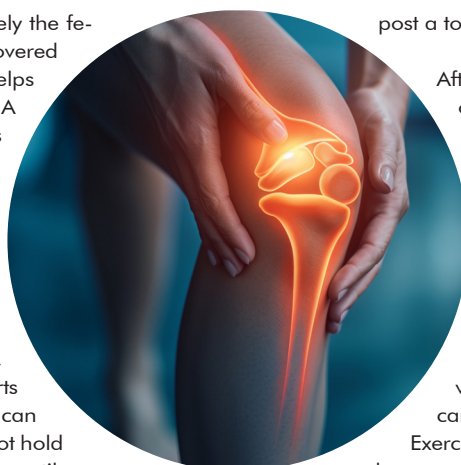
However, if you have a knee with Osteoarthritis, there are changes in the normal structure of your knee. The cartilage, which helps your knee move smoothly, starts to wear away. The inside of your knee can become inflamed, and the ligaments may not hold the knee as tightly as they should. With less cartilage, the space between the bones gets smaller, leading to bones rubbing together, which may cause pain and stiffness, making it hard to move. If your condition progresses to an advanced stage, you might have to undergo a primary total knee replacement procedure as per the diagnosis made by your doctor. During a knee replacement surgery, also known as total knee arthroplasty, the damaged portions of the knee joint are replaced with artificial implants.

Overall, a primary total knee replacement surgery (TKR) is an effective treatment option for individuals with severe knee pain and disability caused by Osteoarthritis. It may significantly improve quality of life and allow patients to regain function and mobility, enabling them to lead a more active lifestyle.

#### Post-operative care: What to keep in mind

It is important to note that the success of primary total knee replacement depends upon multiple factors such as case selection, surgical technique, expertise of surgeon, choice of implant, pre-operative preparation, post-operative rehabilitation, pain management, patient adherence, etc. A knee replacement surgery also carries risks typical of any surgical procedure, including infection and blood clots. While surgeons and their teams try to take care of most of the mentioned factors, it is crucial for patients to understand their role following a surgery to avoid its failure or revision surgery.

Post-operative rehabilitation and patient adherence to clinical guidelines are crucial for the success of total knee replacement (TKR) surgery. Hence, the following things need to be considered



post a total knee replacement surgery.

After knee replacement surgery, the duration of your hospital stay can vary, but most patients stay for 1 to 3 days. Full recovery takes a variable period between one month to three months. Very few patients may have a longer recovery period than the average.

Exercise programs in the perioperative period play a big role in reducing the rehabilitation period. Exercise programs can vary from patient to patient. The exercise can be grouped into the following headings. Exercises aimed at strengthening of muscles of knees and hips, enhancing joint movement, improving blood circulation, and oxygenation. These exercises can be started before surgery and continued after surgery till full recovery.

Right after the surgery, you need to start rehabilitation as your surgeon directs. This includes doing isometric exercises, where you tighten your muscles without moving the joint, several times a day while you are still in bed. You will also need to move your knee, ankle and other joints to stay strong. Your physical therapist will show you the safest ways to get in and out of bed, and chairs, and use the toilet to help you recover effectively.

Rehabilitation is crucial for a successful knee replacement. Its main goals are to strengthen your muscles, improve the movement in your knee joint, protect your new knee, and help you return to your normal activities. Recovery requires time and commitment; the period can vary based on your health and how well you follow your rehab plan. Most people recover within one to three months. When your surgeon thinks you are ready, you should be able to go back to most of your usual daily activities.

After your knee replacement surgery, it's important to have realistic expectations about what activities you can do during your recovery. Your surgeon will guide you on when it's safe to resume activities like driving, leisure and sports, and work. You should avoid activities that could put too much stress on your new knee implant to ensure a smooth recovery. Your compliance with follow-up appointments as a patient is essential to monitor progress, adjust rehabilitation protocols, and address any complications early, which may help in ensuring long-term success and improved quality of life.

**Disclaimer:** The views and opinions expressed by the Surgeon are based on his independent professional judgement. The information provided is for general awareness only and is not intended to be relied upon as medical advice. The outcome of the knee replacement surgery is dependent upon multiple factors. Every patient is different, and individual results vary. All surgeries carry risks. Please consult your respective Doctor for any medical advice.