

Our Doctors



Do You Need a New Knee?

The Physicians at DeKalb Medical's Joint Solutions Center Answer Your Knee Replacement Questions

by Sherry Baker

You can find anything you need in Decatur from fine restaurants and boutiques to upscale condos and historic homes – you can even get yourself a *new hip or knee*.

Decatur is now home to the only joint replacement center of its kind in the metro Atlanta area. Opened in the spring, The Dekalb Medical Joint Solutions Center (JSC) offers the latest technology combined with the feel of home to facilitate healing.

Getting a new knee can be the best solution for joint pain relief especially when you have your own personal recovery coach, an indoor walking circuit and can enjoy creature comforts like being able to wear your own clothes while you recover at the JSC. The best part about knee replacement surgery is it will restore function, reduce pain and get you back on your feet within days of the procedure.

Wonder who needs a knee replacement and what you can expect from the surgery? We put those questions and more to the highly skilled and experienced JSC orthopedic team:

1. Why do people need total knee replacement surgery?

The most common cause is osteoarthritis commonly referred to as wear and tear or degenerative arthritis. The cartilage in the knee breaks down over time resulting in a severely damaged joint surface with bone rubbing on bone, which is very painful.

2. You don't literally replace the entire knee, do you?

Knee replacement surgery allows replacement of parts of your knee that are diseased. "In most cases, we replace the tibial component (the top of the shin bone or tibia), the femoral component (the bottom of the thigh bone or femur) and the patellar component (the surface of the knee cap which rubs against the femur)," says Dr. Maurice Jove. "However, some patients may only have one or two components that need to be replaced. Fortunately, we have access to implants that allow us to perform partial knee replacements."

3. When a patient has total knee replacement surgery, does it hurt?

"Yes, knee replacement surgery is painful. However, with advances in surgical techniques and pain medication, the JSC has achieved a 50 percent reduction in pain directly following surgery. After a patient has finished therapy and fully recovered, it's common for them to experience near complete pain relief," explains Jove.

4. Do the "new parts" you put in the knee ever cause an allergic reaction?

"There is nickel in most implants and some patients have a nickel allergy, but that is extremely rare," says Dr. Paul Richin. "If that is a concern, we use Oxinium implants, which don't contain nickel."

5. When a person has knee replacement surgery, how long does it take to recover?

The hospital stay is brief—around three and a half days on average, including surgery time, at the JSC. Most patients are free of assistive devices such as a cane or walker within four to six weeks after surgery. A return to unlimited activities usually occurs within three months. "Are you off

your feet for days or weeks? No, we get patients up and going immediately after surgery. Patients walk to the Joint Gym for physical therapy and take daily jaunts on our Georgia Sightseer Tour indoor walking circuit within 24 hours of surgery," Dr. Robert Karsch emphasizes.

6. Will my knee work like new after surgery?

Yes. It will never feel quite the same as it did when you were young, but it will feel a lot better than it did before the surgery.

7. Do you need physical therapy after knee replacement surgery?

"Absolutely. Physical therapy plays a large part in the success and outcome of your knee replacement, restoring mobility, preventing scar tissue buildup and the likelihood of more surgery down the road," notes Karsch.

For how long? Therapy begins immediately in our Joint Gym—often on the same day of surgery at the JSC—and continues when you go home usually for four to six weeks.

8. How long are you out of work following knee replacement surgery?

The amount of time off usually depends on the type of job you do, but most patients are out of work anywhere from 6 to 12 weeks.

9. How long will my knee replacement last?

It depends on many different factors as well as the patient's lifestyle. "However, it has been our experience that most knee implants last 15 or 20 years and even longer—a lifetime for many of our patients," notes Richin.

10. How many total knee replacements do you perform?

"The JSC performs more than 400 total knee replacement surgeries a year with a success rate above 90 percent. "The entire staff at the JSC—our orthopedists, nurses, physical and occupational therapists, case managers and volunteers—are all specially trained in orthopedics and dedicated to the care and rehabilitation of patients who have had total joint replacement," Jove answers. "Every aspect of the center is focused on the patient, their families and their recovery."

The Doctors of Joint Solutions Center



Maurice Jove,
M.D.

Dr. Jove is the JSC's lead physician, has been providing orthopedic care to patients in the greater Atlanta area for the past 24 years. Board certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery and a fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgery, his specialties include medical and surgical treatment of arthritis, joint replacement surgery, sports medicine and more.



Paul Richin,
M.D.

Dr. Richin is a fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and specializes in hip and knee replacements, arthroscopic surgery and sports medicine. A graduate of Georgetown University Medical School, he has more than 30 years of experience in his field.



Robert Karsch,
M.D.

Dr. Karsch received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1989. Board certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, Karsch's training included a fellowship in sports medicine at Emory, a surgical residency at the Montefiore Medical Center and Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, and a fellowship in orthopaedic research at Montefiore.

Have more questions or want to find out more about joint replacement at a free community education class? Contact Dekalb Medical Center at 404.501.WELL, or the JSC physicians: Maurice Jove, M.D. (Georgia Knee and Sports Medicine, 404.296.5005) Robert Karsch, M.D. (University Orthopedics, 404.299.1700) Paul Richin, M.D. (404.294.4111).