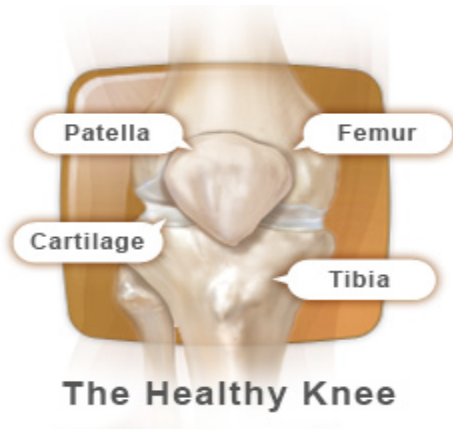


The Total Knee Replacement

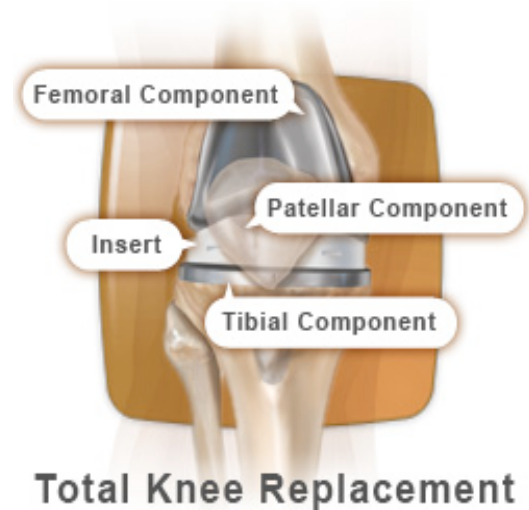
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The knee is the largest joint in the body. It is commonly referred to as the “hinge joint” because it allows the knee to flex (bend) and extend. The knee joint is formed by the tibia (shin bone), the femur (thigh bone) and the patella (knee cap). Each bone end is covered with a layer of smooth, shiny cartilage that cushions and protects while allowing near frictionless movement. Cartilage, which contains no nerve endings or blood supply, receives nutrients from the fluid contained within the joint.



There are two types of knee replacements one can undergo. People who have pain in their knees while resting and limit their everyday activities such as walking without any support are recommended to have a total knee replacement. If only a part (one side) of your knee is damaged a partial knee replacement is recommended.

There are three components used in the artificial knee. The femoral (thigh) component is made of metal and covers the end of the thigh bone. The tibial (shin bone) component, made of metal and polyethylene (medical-grade plastic), covers the top end of the tibia. The metal forms the base of this component, while the polyethylene is attached to the top of the metal to serve as a cushion and smooth gliding surface. The third component, the patella (kneecap) may be all polyethylene or a combination of metal and polyethylene. (1)



The procedure itself takes about two hours. The patient will have to remain in the hospital for the next few days till the patient shows the replaced knee is not infected. Knee joint infections occur to less than two percent of patients. It will take normally a patient anywhere from three to six weeks of recovery time before they can return to their normal living styles.

Usually patients that need total knee replacements are from the age 60 to 80. There is about 600,000 knee replacements done every year worldwide. With a knee replacement patients able to return to living their normal lives without the chronic knee pains that they endured in the past.

References:

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