

PARTIAL (UNICOMPARTMENTAL) KNEE REPLACEMENT – EXTRA PATIENT INFORMATION

WHAT IS A KNEE REPLACEMENT?

Knee replacement (arthroplasty) surgery is a common procedure. It involves cutting away worn out bone and cartilage and replacing those articulating surfaces with a combination of metallic knee implants and highly specialized plastic (polyethylene). The procedure takes approximately 90 minutes and is often performed under general and/or spinal anaesthesia.

WHAT IS A “UNI” KNEE?

A particular type of knee replacement in which only one compartment is resurfaced (uni = one).

Although they are all connected within the true joint, the knee is divided into three functional compartments: medial (inside), lateral (outside) and patellofemoral (kneecap). Total knee replacement involves resurfacing each of these areas simultaneously, by resurfacing the entire femur (thigh) and tibia (shin) cartilage areas.

Partial (or unicompartamental) knee replacement, resurfaces only one compartment. In most instances this involves replacing the medial (inside) half, leaving the lateral (outside) half and patella (kneecap) untouched.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF A UNI KNEE (COMPARED TO A TOTAL KNEE)?

By only resurfacing part of the knee, the ACL ligament can be left intact (unlike total knee replacement in which it is removed). The benefit of not requiring resection of your ACL ligament, is that the mechanics of the knee are more normal afterwards. One year after knee replacement, most patients report high satisfaction; however, Uni knee replacement patients are more likely to report their knee feels “normal”. This is the main reason to consider partial replacement if appropriate.

WHY DOESN'T EVERYONE GET ONE?

Partial knee replacement is only indicated in patients with partial knee arthritis.

Most patients with arthritis have more diffuse arthritis throughout the entire knee, and so are not suitable for partial replacement. During the consultation, I consider history, clinical examination, Xray and MRI to assess if partial or total knee replacement is more appropriate. I will discuss this in more detail during our consultation.

IS IT ONLY HALF A KNEE REPLACEMENT?

Yes, but No. It is still a knee replacement, which is major surgery. Despite only being “half” a knee replacement, the hospital and early postoperative management of partial knee replacement is very similar to total knee replacement.

Please read my general advice for knee replacement, in conjunction with this information. It outlines

- what to expect after your surgery
- care of the knee: including wound care, pain relief, early exercises, physiotherapy and rehab needs
- possible complications

Finally, if you have any questions with regards to your surgery or post-operative care, please feel free to contact my secretary on (07) 5455 9465.