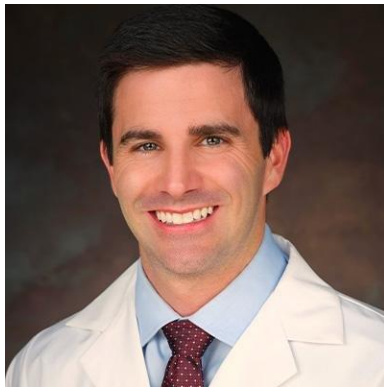


# Thinking About Knee Replacement Surgery



Zac Burrow, MD, DPT

I want you to know that I understand this is a big decision, and it often comes after months or even years of pain, limitation, and frustration.

**My goal is simple: to help you feel better, move better, and get back to the life you enjoy.**

I care deeply about your outcome—not just in the operating room, but in your recovery and long-term success. Every decision we make is centered around what is safest, most effective, and best for *you* as an individual.

This guide is designed to walk you through the process, answer common questions, and help you feel confident and prepared every step of the way. You are not going through this alone—we are a team, and I am committed to supporting you throughout your entire journey.

**Thank you for trusting me with your care!**

\*Pictures in this guide were obtained from AAOS, HEP2Go.com, or generated with ChatGPT\*

## General information can also be found at:

- Total Knee Replacement - OrthoInfo – AAOS  
<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/treatment/total-knee-replacement>
- Total Knee Replacement - AAHKS  
<https://hipkneeinfo.org/knee-care/total-knee-replacement/>
- Video - Total Knee Replacement Animation - OrthoInfo - AAOS  
<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/treatment/total-knee-replacement-animation/>

## Important Phone Numbers

### **Dr. Burrow Direct Line:** 918-927-3258

- Call for refills of medications, general questions/concerns
- May also use online patient portal
  - MyMobility App is not monitored

### **Surgery Scheduling:** 918-927-3301

- Scheduler will call you to schedule surgery once all clearances are obtained
  - Call for any surgical scheduling questions
  - Cancel, reschedule, etc.

### **Billing Department:** 918-927-3737

- Any billing questions for AOOK

### **Brace Shop:** 918-927-3308

### **Hospital Pre-Admission Testing:**

- Oklahoma Surgical Hospital: 918-477-5073
- St. John Broken Arrow: 918-994-8045

### **Urgent Surgical Problem:** 918-494-2665

### **Emergency:** 911

## Knee Anatomy: Understanding Your Joint

### Bones

- Three bones come together to form the knee joint:
  - **Femur (thigh bone)**
  - **Tibia (shin bone)**
  - **Patella (kneecap)**

### Cartilage

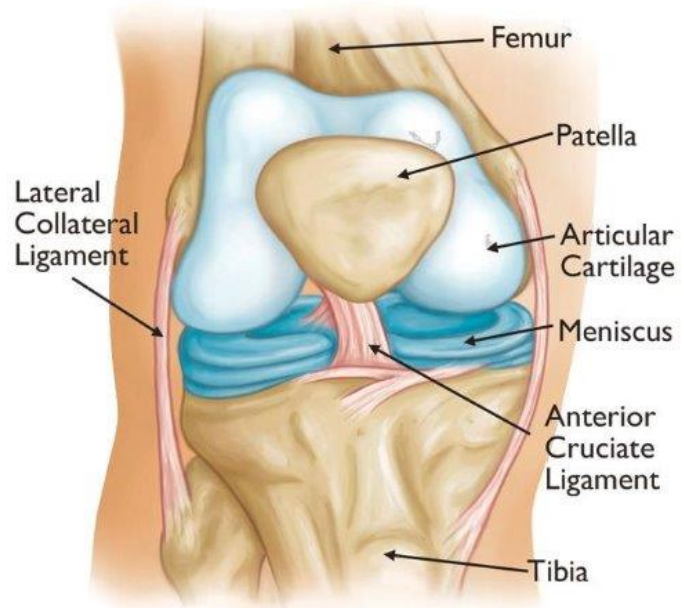
- A **smooth, protective tissue** that covers the ends of the bones
- Helps the bones **glide smoothly without pain** during movement
- Acts as a cushion

### Synovial Membrane

- A thin lining inside the knee
- Produces fluid that:
  - Reduces friction
  - Keeps the joint lubricated

### Ligaments and Tendons

- **Ligaments:**
  - Connect bone to bone
  - Provide stability
- **Tendons:**
  - Connect muscle to bone
  - Allow movement



### Muscles

- Muscles around the knee help with **movement and stability**
- Key muscle groups include:
  - **Quadriceps** (front of the thigh)
  - **Hamstrings** (back of the thigh)
- **What they do:**
  - Help you **straighten and bend your knee**
  - Support the joint during walking, standing, and activity

## What Happens in Knee Arthritis

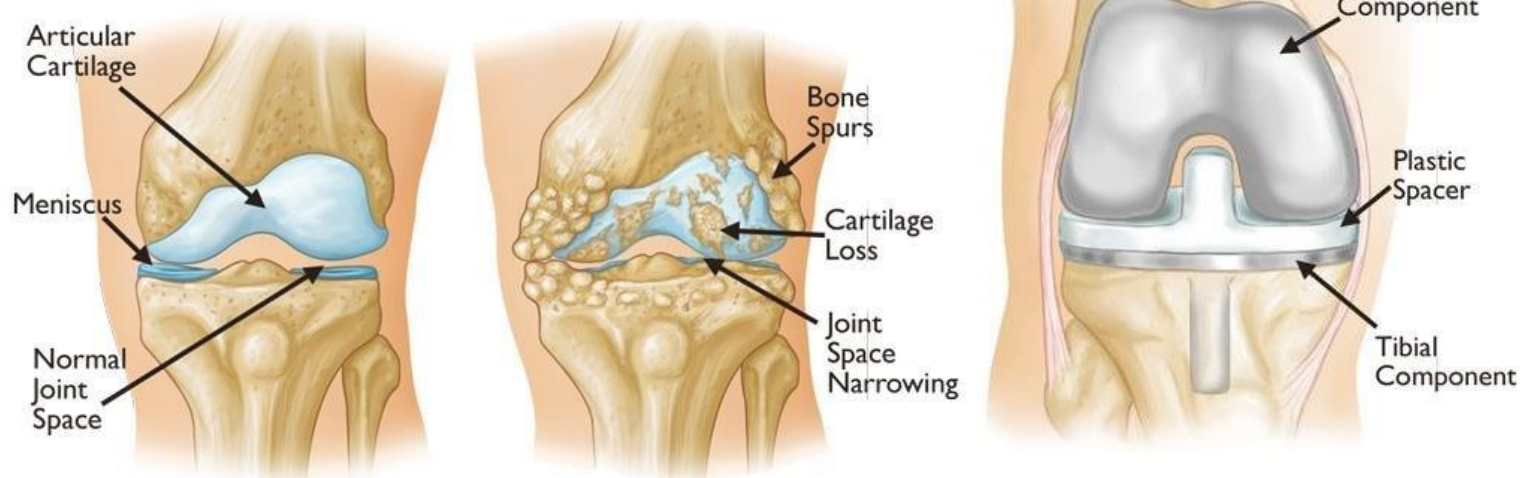
Over time, the knee joint can be worn down, leading to pain and stiffness.

### Changes in the Joint

- The **cartilage wears down**
- The bones may begin to **rub together (bone-on-bone)**

### What You May Feel

- Increased **inflammation and pain**
- **Stiffness** in the knee
- **Limited movement and flexibility**



## What Is a Knee Replacement

Knee replacement surgery is designed to remove the damaged joint and create a smooth, pain-free surface.

### What Is Done During Surgery

- The **damaged cartilage and bone are removed**
- The joint is resurfaced with **artificial components**:
  - Metal and plastic parts replace the surfaces of the:
    - **Femur (thigh bone)**
    - **Tibia (shin bone)**
    - **Patella (kneecap)**

### Benefits of Knee Replacement

- Reduces or eliminates **pain**
- Improves **movement and flexibility**
- Helps restore **function and daily activity**

### Why This Works

- The new joint creates a **smooth, low-friction surface**, allowing your knee to move more comfortably.

## Immediately After Surgery (Hospital Stay or Outpatient)

### Common After Surgery

- Pain and swelling in the operated leg
- A bandage covering your knee incision
- Medications to help with: Pain control & Blood clot prevention

### Physical Therapy Starts Early

- Begin **basic exercises within 24 hours**
- Help you **stand and start walking**
- Teach you how to move safely using a **walker**

### Hospital Stay

- Most patients stay **1 night in the hospital**
  - Some patients may: Go home the **same day** or may need a **longer hospital stay**

## At Home: First Few Weeks After Surgery

### Mobility & Walking

- Use a **walker at first**, then transition to a **cane** as you improve
- Walk **short distances multiple times per day**
- Gradually work toward: Longer walks & Climbing stairs safely

### Physical Therapy

- We will try to arrange **home health physical therapy**
  - This typically starts the 4<sup>th</sup> day after you return home
  - *Note: Insurance may limit this option*
- Continue:
  - **Daily home exercises**
  - Use of the **MyMobility App** for guidance

### Pain & Swelling

- It is normal to have: Pain (managed with medications and ice) & bruising / swelling
- Swelling will **improve gradually over several weeks**

### Help at Home

- You will likely need help with: Cooking, Bathing, Daily activities
- Plan for assistance for the **first 1–2 weeks**

### Activity Goals

- Walk several times per day
- Increase activity **slowly and safely**
- Motion Goal: 0-90° at 3 weeks after surgery

## Mid-Term Recovery: 6 Weeks to 3 Months

### Mobility & Walking

- Walking becomes **easier and more natural**
- Decreased need for a **walker or cane**
- **Better knee motion** and strength

### Return to Daily Activities

- Gradual return to normal daily routines
- May begin: Light household tasks
- Driving (*typically around 4–6 weeks, if cleared by your physician*)

### What Is Normal

- **Stiffness, swelling, fatigue**, especially after activity
- These symptoms are common and should improve over time

### Activity Progression

- Continue to increase activity **gradually**
- Stay consistent with exercises and therapy

## Full Recovery: 3 to 12 Months

### What to Expect

- Most patients return to **normal daily activities by 3 months**
- Continued improvement in: Strength, Balance, Comfort
- Full recovery may take up to **1 year**

### Return to Activities

- Most patients can safely return to:
  - Walking
  - Swimming
  - Biking
  - Other **low-impact activities**

### Activities to Avoid

- Running
- High-impact sports
- Activities that place excessive stress on the joint

## Possible Risks with Knee Replacement

While most patients do very well after surgery, it's important to understand potential risks and how to prevent them.

### Infection

- At the incision site
- Deep in the joint
- Can occur shortly after surgery or even years later
- **Prevention:**
  - Antibiotics during and after surgery
  - Proper wound care

### Blood Clots (DVT or PE)

- **DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis):** Blood clot in the leg
- **PE (Pulmonary Embolism):** Blood clot that travels to the lungs
- **Prevention:**
  - Blood thinning medications
  - Walking early and often
  - Compression devices or stockings

### Implant Problems

- Artificial parts may wear down or loosen over time
- **What this means:**
  - May require **revision (repeat) surgery** in the future

### Stiffness or Limited Motion

- Some patients may have difficulty fully bending or fully straightening the knee
- **Management:**
  - Additional physical therapy
  - Rarely, further procedures

### Nerve, Blood Vessel, or Soft Tissue Injury

- Rare, but nearby structures may be affected
- **May cause:** Numbness, weakness, circulation issues
- **What is normal:**
  - Some **numbness on the outside of the knee** is common
  - This usually improves over time, but a small numb area may remain permanently

### Persistent Pain

- Some patients may continue to have pain after healing
- **Possible causes:** Scar tissue, nerve sensitivity, other unrelated conditions

### Less Common but Serious Risks

- Anesthesia complications: nausea, breathing problems, allergic reactions
- Bone fracture: during or after surgery
- Knee instability or kneecap dislocation

### Other Unpredictable Risks

- Rare complications can occur including: heart attack, stroke, death, other issues that **cannot be fully predicted**



*God Bless your recovery! I have already prayed for you during your surgery and will continue to do so. ZPB*