

**3** MINUTE
READ

5 Signs It's Time to Talk to Your Doctor About Joint Replacement Surgery

**When is joint replacement needed?
How to recognize the signs that it may
be time to talk to your doctor about
treatment options.**

There's no one factor that ensures joint replacement surgery is necessary. For some people, joint pain is completely debilitating. For others, pain manifests itself as an achy joint every second Wednesday of the month or when it's raining. The first step to find out if joint replacement is right for you is to see a doctor who can analyse the cause of your joint pain. Joint pain can be caused by soft tissue injuries for which joint replacement is not an appropriate treatment. Joint replacement is only appropriate for patients with certain disease states, bony deformities, or specific injuries.

Whether you've suffered from joint pain for years or just days, here are a few signs that it may be time to start a conversation with your doctor:

1 Your pain is... a pain.

Always getting in the way, your joint pain has no respect for your social life. Grandkids' birthday parties. Sunday barbecues. Your annual guys-weekend-golf-extravaganza. They're all victims of your aching joint. It rains... your joint hurts. You sleep... your joint hurts. What used to be a minor annoyance seems to have gotten worse. Sometimes you wonder if the pain's ever going to end. If pain is interfering with your daily activities, talk to your doctor about your options and associated risks. Sometimes, medication or physical therapy can offer enough support to get you comfortable again. If not, your pain could be due to bone and cartilage deterioration and it may be time to consider joint replacement surgery.

2 "Your house has how many stairs?!"

Ah, yes... stairs. You used to bound up and down them like a nimble kangaroo, but lately you feel more like a three-toed sloth. Bathtubs, chairs, and car seats all present a new and unfriendly challenge. **Remember the remote control you dropped behind the sofa this morning? Yep, it's still there waiting to be rescued.** But your leg just doesn't bend that low anymore. If your movement is becoming more and more restricted, it may be time to talk to your doctor.

3 You're more swollen than you feel after your third round at a family meal.

One day you're sewing a button back on your favourite shirt, the next day your fingers look like sausage links. While joint swelling could be a symptom of multiple ailments, it could be a sign it's time to talk to your doctor about joint replacement surgery or other treatments that may be right for you.

4

Ah, that old ACL tear from the year you took home from the cup final.

At the time, it was your badge of honour. The **keeper** was no competition for your game-winning **penalty**. It was that **right-back** who slide-tackled you two seconds too late causing you to tear your ACL. Over time, old injuries can cause uneven wear on your joint that leads to pain. If you suffered a previous injury or trauma, it might be time to discuss its progression with your doctor.

5

You have your mother's blue eyes, curly hair, and...arthritis?

While genetics don't play a sole role in determining whether or not you will struggle with arthritis, they can predisposition you to certain types. If arthritis runs in your family, talk to your doctor about your risks and whether or not your joint pain could be caused by arthritis.



If any of these scenarios resonate with you, talk to your doctor about your options. Your doctor may refer you to an orthopedic surgeon who will help you determine if you're a candidate for joint replacement surgery and can discuss any associated risks. They may first suggest alternative, less invasive treatments depending on the condition of your joint. Joint replacement surgery may not be appropriate if you have an infection, if you don't have a bone condition (such as arthritis), do not have enough bone, or the bone is not strong enough to support an artificial joint.

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