Minimally Invasive Total Knee Replacement

Total knee arthroplasty (or replacement) is a surgery that is performed for severe degeneration of the knee joint. More than 300,000 people a year undergo the procedure. Minimally invasive total knee arthroplasty is a method of performing a knee replacement through a smaller incision.

Knees wear out for a variety of reasons, including inflammation from arthritis, injury or simply wear and tear. A knee replacement is the resurfacing of the worn out surfaces of the knee, replacing the cartilage that has been lost with metal and plastic. This is typically done through an incision down the center of the knee that averages 8" to 10" long. Minimally invasive total knee arthroplasty is a way of performing the surgery through a incision that is only 4" to 6" long, with potentially less damage to the tissue around the knee.

Risk Factors/Prevention

Although arthritis can run in families, most arthritis is due to a lifetime of wear and tear on the knees. The reasons that some people get severe arthritis and others don't, or even why one of a person's knees gets arthritis while the other does not aren't known. Some known causes are previous injuries or obesity.

Symptoms

Knee arthritis leads to pain that is often associated with activity but can occur at rest. Patients often find it difficult to go up or down stairs, walk distances, get up from low seats. There can be associated swelling, stiffness or a feeling of instability.