

## Why is it important to get a second opinion for a total hip replacement?

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When choosing a hip replacement surgeon you will want to compare two or even three surgeons. Total hip surgery is a major time commitment (you could be recovering for up to two months). It's also a major lifestyle change, and usually very expensive. Getting a second opinion will ultimately help you to gain perspective on the condition you have, possible non-surgical alternatives, and then the specific surgical procedure that is best for you. Last but not least, revision does occur in hip replacement surgery but if you can find a good surgeon, a second surgery won't be necessary.

This is an important decision in your life and requires some time to think about. Preparing for hip replacement surgery also means educating yourself about your possible options. For example, a total hip surgery may not be the best solution for younger patients. Hip resurfacing leaves more bone in place, giving patients more time before a total hip surgery becomes necessary.

Even when you have decided that a total hip replacement is necessary, you still have to consider that each surgeon will have a different idea on how to treat your condition. Surgeons use different approaches regarding surgical incisions in total hip replacements. They will choose between different implant materials, different sizes of femoral heads, and whether to anchor the hip implant using bone cement fixation or a process called "bone ingrowth". Beyond that, some surgeons use more progressive surgical techniques and technology, while others rely on trusted traditional methods.

For all of these reasons, seeking a second opinion will give you more perspective on your hip replacement.

It is smart to bring a list of questions you prepare ahead of time for your prospective surgeons. Not only will you want to "get to know" your doctor, but you will also want to find out about their past medical experience. A surgeon will not be offended if you ask them about their track record; in fact, they will see you as someone who has done their homework and wants to make the right decision. Here are a list of questions to ask your doctor:

- \* How long have you used your current prosthesis and what are your reasons for having selected it?
- \* How many do you do each year? - anything over 500 is good
- \* What is your infection rate?- 0.5% or less is good
- \* What is your incidence of short-term complications- dislocations, wound infections?
- \* What is your incidence of long-term complications- infections, loosening, breakages of prosthesis, clicking, clunking, unidentifiable pains, need for manipulations?

In addition, you can find out about good total hip replacement surgeons from family and friends who have undergone similar surgeries. While you're making your appointments, keep in mind that most in-demand surgeons have schedules booked six months in advance.

Getting a second opinion for a hip replacement is the single most important thing you can do for your hip surgery. Take the time to listen to what each surgeon has to say before choosing the right one.

## About Bonesmart.org -

BoneSmart.org is a National Public-Awareness Campaign for Candidates of Total Hip Replacement Surgery and Knee Replacement Surgery. The BoneSmart® National Consumer Awareness Campaign's mission is to raise patient awareness of the options available to persons diagnosed as a hip replacement or knee replacement candidates by providing an Internet portal for awareness of the latest advances in joint replacement materials, their longevity and suitability for various applications.