

Understanding TMJ Replacement Surgery

What is TMJ Replacement Surgery? TMJ replacement surgery involves replacing part or all of the temporomandibular joint (TMJ) with artificial implants. It is typically recommended for patients who have severe joint damage, arthritis, trauma, or have not responded to other treatments.

Why Might You Need TMJ Replacement?

- Severe TMJ arthritis or degeneration
- Trauma or injury to the TMJ
- Severe pain or dysfunction not improved by other treatments
- TMJ ankylosis (joint fusion)

Benefits of TMJ Replacement:

- Reduced or eliminated joint pain
- Improved jaw function and movement
- Enhanced quality of life
- Improved ability to eat, speak, and perform daily activities

What to Expect During the Procedure:

- Surgery is performed under general anesthesia.
- Incisions are made around the ear and jaw area to access the joint.
- Damaged joint components are removed and replaced with customized artificial implants.
- Surgery typically lasts 2-4 hours.

About the Implants:

- TMJ implants are typically made from biocompatible materials such as titanium, cobalt-chromium alloys, and ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene (UHMWPE).
- These materials are chosen for their durability, strength, and compatibility with human tissues.
- TMJ implants typically last many years, often exceeding 15-20 years, though the exact duration depends on individual factors such as patient health, implant design, and activity level.

Recovery After Surgery:

- Hospital stay usually lasts 1-2 days.
- Swelling and discomfort are common initially; ice packs and medications help manage symptoms.
- A soft-food diet is necessary for several weeks post-surgery.

- Gradual return to normal activities occurs over weeks to months.

Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation:

- Regular physical therapy sessions will be recommended to regain jaw movement and strength.
- Specific exercises will be provided to improve and maintain joint function.

Risks and Considerations:

- Like any surgery, risks include infection, implant failure, nerve injury, and limited jaw mobility.
- There is a specific risk of facial nerve injury, which may result in temporary or permanent facial weakness.
- Regular follow-up visits are crucial to monitor healing and implant function.

Questions or Concerns:

- It's important to discuss any concerns or questions with your surgeon before and after surgery. Your comfort and understanding are essential to your recovery and overall satisfaction.

We are committed to your successful recovery. Please contact our office if you have further questions about TMJ replacement surgery.