

Living with Your New Joint

Will my implant set off metal detectors at airports and courthouses?

Usually patients with joint replacements will set off metal detectors. It is reasonable for you to inform the TSA screening agent at the airport that you have had a joint replacement; however, you will still require screening and will need to follow the directions of the screening agent. Learn more about airport security.

There are millions of individuals with joint replacements, and screening protocols recognize that people who have had joint replacements may set off detectors. You do not need to carry specific documentation to prove that you have a joint replacement.

Metal detector screenings follow universal protocols that allow for people with joint replacements to proceed after confirmation that no threat exists.

Will I need to take antibiotics prior to seeing a dentist or having other invasive procedures?

The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgery (AAOS) and American Dental Association (ADA) have generally recommended short-term antibiotics prior to dental procedures (one dose one hour prior to dental procedure) for patients who have had joint replacements. This recommendation continues for **up to two years after your joint replacement**.

Two or more years after the replacement, continued use of antibiotics prior to dental procedures is based on the discretion of the treating surgeon and the patient. Your surgeon will consider many factors including whether or not you are at increased risk of infection due to immune suppression (i.e. diabetic, transplant patients, and rheumatoid arthritis).

The use of prophylactic antibiotics prior to dental cleanings and other invasive procedures remains controversial. Most orthopaedic surgeons now recommend **lifetime suppression**. Patients should discuss whether or not they need antibiotics prior to dental or other invasive procedures with their treating orthopedic surgeon. See also “Preventing Infection in Your Joint at the Dentist’s Office.”

Should I continue to see my surgeon after I’ve healed?

It is important to follow up with your surgeon after your joint replacement. In most cases, joint replacements last for many years. You need to meet with your treating doctor after surgery to ensure that your replacement is continuing to function well. In some cases, the replaced parts can start to wear out or loosen.

The frequency of required follow up visits is dependent on many factors including the age of the patient, the demand levels placed on the joint, and the type of replacement. Your physician will consider all these factors and tailor a follow-up schedule to meet your needs.

In general, **seeing your surgeon every three to five years is recommended.**

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