



Ankle Replacement for Advanced Ankle Arthritis

The decision as to whether an ankle fusion or ankle replacement is best depends on several factors.

- Age
- Medical comorbidities
- Functional demand.
- Severity of the arthritis
- Deformity
- Ligament insufficiency

Ankle replacement maintains some motion. It is an operation best suited for older patients (>65) with low functional demands, a well aligned stable ankle, not overweight and with few medical problems

An ankle replacement replaces the surface of the tibia and talus with a metal prosthesis. A polyethylene spacer is placed between which allows the talus and tibia to glide over each other.

The advantage maintaining motion in the ankle is that it can protect joints in the foot and the knee while still providing pain relief. The ankle joint motion obtained after replacement is not normal, and is largely determined by the motion that is present preoperatively.

Ankle replacement has not been around as long as knee and hip replacement and is not as successful.

At 10 years 80% of ankle replacements are still functioning.

Ankle replacement is not as successful in the long term as a fusion because the implants may fail.



What does the rehabilitation involve?

- 2-3 nights in hospital
- For the first 2 weeks elevate the limb
- 2 weeks in a cast non weight bearing
- 4 weeks in a boot full weight bearing
- Physiotherapy post operatively from 2 weeks
- By 3 months managing around house
- By 6 months back to most activities
- 1 year for final result

What are the risks of the procedure?

General Risks of surgery

- Infection increased in smokers
- Wound breakdown and delayed healing
- Nerve injury and scar sensitivity
- Blood clots to the leg
- Anaesthetic problems

Complications specific to ankle replacement

- Deep infection of the joint – 2%
- Delayed wound healing – 5%
- Intraoperative fracture
- Incomplete resolution of symptoms
- Stiffness
- Impingement requiring further surgery
- Prosthesis loosening or wear
- Failure of the implant

If there is a deep infection, loosening, wear or ongoing severe pain the prosthesis may require removal and a fusion performed.

This information is an overview of the ankle replacement and is not all inclusive.

If you have any questions regarding this please contact Mr. Curry 's rooms on **(03) 9928 6560**