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## New knees, new surgical options

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Activities you choose and places you go, such as bicycling or swimming and visiting parks, malls, or museums, should be based on what you want to do, not on how your knees feel. Knee pain has various causes and degrees to which it impairs patients' lifestyles, but several treatment options exist.

### Osteoarthritis

Arthritis is among the most common causes of knee pain. The most common form of knee arthritis,

according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, is osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis is a progressive, degenerative disease in which cartilage deteriorates, causing bones to grind together and results in joint damage as well as pain, stiffness, inactivity and immobility.

In the early stages of osteoarthritis, treatments such as physical therapy, medications, injections and arthroscopy can diminish pain and may help delay the progression. But when conservative treatments fail to provide adequate relief, patients today have options for getting their quality of

life back by undergoing one of several procedures, some of which may be done as a same-day surgery.

### Knee resurfacing

The term "knee replacement" is actually a misnomer that has been used for years and has been a source of anxiety for some patients, as it can lead people to believe their entire knee would be taken out and replaced with an artificial joint. Nothing could be further from the truth. Over the last 30 years, orthopedic research in this area has focused on developing more non-invasive surgical techniques and components. Currently, the more appropriate name for these procedures is resurfacing.

Using the newest techniques, surgeons are able to remove only the thin layer of damaged, inflamed cartilage that covers the end of the bones, leaving virtually everything else in place. Then, the surfaces are reconstituted with low-profile metal and plastic components, creating a balanced, well-functioning knee. These procedures prevent further bone degeneration, restore deformities and eliminate pain.

### Partial knee resurfacing

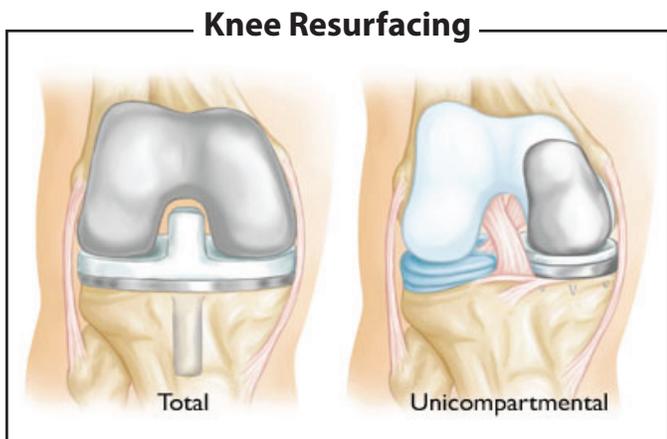
Partial knee resurfacing, or unicompartmental knee arthroplasty or UKA, is a minimally invasive surgical option for patients whose osteoarthritis is lim-

ited to one part of the knee. Incisions and recovery periods are shorter with UKA compared to total joint resurfacing, because the incisions, dissection and implants are smaller. Candidacy is determined at the time of the consultation with the doctor by examination and specialized x-rays.

At Sturdy, UKA is available on an outpatient basis for appropriate patients. As an outpatient surgery, the benefits include faster recovery, reduced complication rates and lower health care costs. A process involving comprehensive pre-operative and after-care programs, with multispecialty support, education and evaluation from home health nurses and physical therapists, primary care physicians and orthopedic surgeons, enables UKA to be performed as a same-day procedure.

The artificial joint materials used today last, on average, 20-25 years before a second surgery might be needed. So, the practice of prolonging joint resurfacing surgery in order to avoid multiple revisions is obsolete.

If you experience knee pain from osteoarthritis, talk to your doctor today about available treatment.



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