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## Treatment Options to Consider Before Knee Replacement Surgery

If you are suffering from knee arthritis, the following treatment options are available:

1. **Live with the symptoms.**
2. **Lifestyle modifications**, including activity changes and particularly weight loss. Your knee sees up to 8x your body weight with every step, so a 10kg weight loss up to 80kg weight loss for your knee!
3. **Low impact physical therapy or aquatic therapy.** An arthritic knee benefits from gentle exercise.
4. **Medications.** Paracetamol can be used to help with symptoms. It has a low side effect profile for the vast majority of patients. NSAID medications are frequently cited as being somewhat more effective in terms of pain relief due to their additional anti-inflammatory properties. These medicines, while very effective, can irritate the lining of the stomach, raise your blood pressure, and irritate the kidneys. In the past, doctors prescribed opiates for this diagnosis. This led to significant abuse and addiction. Opiates are not generally recommended for knee arthritis.
5. **Intra-articular injections.** Steroid and hyaluronic acid (HA) injections can be used to help reduce knee arthritis pain.
6. **Rheumatoid arthritis patients should consult with a rheumatologist** prior to any surgery to determine if one of the new medications can improve their symptoms. In the last three decades, these new medicines have saved thousands of patients from needing surgery!
7. **Nerve treatments.** There are multiple nerves around the knee that can targeted to help relieve pain. Pain management specialists may be able to perform this.
8. **Knee arthroscopy**, or key hole surgery of the knee, has a limited role in helping arthritic knee pain. It might be considered in cases where there are 'mechanical' symptoms such as locking of the knee.
9. **Osteotomy.** This is a procedure that involves cutting the tibia (shin bone) or the femur (thigh bone) and changing the alignment of the leg. This takes pressure off the arthritic side of the knee and transfers it to the non-arthritic side. It is generally reserved for younger patients.
10. **Partial knee replacement.** This is a procedure that involves replacing one part of the knee. The knee can be divided into three parts: The inside (medial compartment), the outside (lateral compartment) and the kneecap joint (patellofemoral compartment).
11. **Knee replacement** is generally the final answer to end-stage arthritis. This involves replacing the cartilage on the end of the femur and the top of the tibia and often the undersurface of the patella. This is the most common surgical treatment for knee arthritis.



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