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Finger Joint Replacements

Description:

In the hand, the most frequently replaced joint is the knuckle joint (metacarpophalangeal). The most common reason for replacing the knuckle joints is for rheumatoid arthritis, although occasionally after an injury, there may be an isolated joint that has osteoarthritis, which may benefit from a joint replacement. The likelihood of a successful outcome and whether or not any individual patient may benefit from finger joint replacements, is a very personal decision. Usually, an in-depth discussion with a hand surgeon will be required, x-rays of the hand inspected closely, and a discussion of the risks and benefits would take place.

Treatment:

Finger joint replacements are not as long-lasting as some of the larger joints that are commonly replaced, such as hip joints and knee joints. For this reason, all cases really need to be discussed on an individual basis. Other joints in the hand may be replaced, such as the finger joints and the base of the thumb; these can be used in patients with both osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Complications:

Complications that may occur after finger joint replacement include infection and stiffness, as well as dislocation of the joints. Approximately 80% of patients are satisfied after surgery, but the complication rate is certainly higher than in the larger joints and careful consideration before surgery is indicated.

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