

Robotic Total Hip Replacement

Total Hip Arthroplasty (THA) — Your Friendly Guide to What to Expect
Everything you need to know, written in plain English — no jargon, no scary stuff.

So — What Exactly is a Robotic Total Hip Replacement?

A total hip replacement — or total hip arthroplasty — is one of the most successful and life-changing surgical procedures performed worldwide. It replaces a damaged or arthritic hip joint with an artificial implant, eliminating the pain and restoring the movement that the deteriorated joint has taken away.

Robotic-assisted hip replacement takes this procedure to the next level. Using advanced imaging and a robotic arm system, the surgeon creates a precise, personalised surgical plan based on your unique anatomy before you even enter the theatre. During surgery, the robotic system guides the placement of your implant with a level of accuracy that is simply not achievable by hand alone — ensuring the implant sits at exactly the right angle and position for your body.

This is not a robot performing surgery autonomously. Your surgeon remains fully in control throughout — the robotic arm is a precision tool that works under their guidance, preventing them from moving outside the planned boundaries and giving real-time feedback on implant positioning as the procedure progresses.

The result is a more accurately placed implant, better joint function, reduced risk of dislocation, less soft tissue damage, and — for most people — a faster, more comfortable recovery. We access robotic hip replacement through our hospital partners in India, at a fraction of the cost of having the procedure done privately in New Zealand.

Is Hip Replacement Right for You?

Hip replacement is typically recommended when hip pain and loss of mobility are significantly affecting your quality of life and have not responded to conservative treatments. You might be a candidate if you recognise yourself in these:

- ✓ You have been diagnosed with osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, or avascular necrosis of the hip joint
- ✓ Hip pain significantly limits your everyday activities — walking, climbing stairs, getting in and out of a car
- ✓ You experience pain at rest, including at night, that disrupts your sleep
- ✓ Pain relief medications, physiotherapy, and other conservative treatments are no longer providing adequate relief

✓	You are generally in good health and fit enough to undergo surgery and rehabilitation
✓	You have realistic expectations — a hip replacement restores function and eliminates pain, but high-impact activities like running or contact sports will still be off the table
✓	Your weight is in a range your surgical team is comfortable operating at safely

	<i>Not sure if you're at the right stage? That's exactly what the consultation is for. The surgical team will review your imaging, health history, and current limitations, and give you an honest assessment of whether the time is right — and whether robotic-assisted surgery is suitable for your specific case.</i>
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Robotic vs Traditional Hip Replacement — What's the Difference?

Both approaches replace the damaged hip joint with an implant — but how the surgeon achieves that result differs significantly:

✓ Advantages	✗ Considerations
Pre-operative CT scan creates a 3D model of your exact anatomy for personalised planning	Longer operating time — setting up and calibrating the robotic system adds time to the procedure
Robotic arm guides the surgeon in real time, preventing deviations from the surgical plan	Not available at all hospitals — requires specialist equipment and trained surgical teams
Implant placement is measurably more accurate — consistently within the optimal 'safe zone'	Higher cost than conventional hip replacement in New Zealand — though the gap is far smaller in India
Lower risk of dislocation due to precise cup angle and positioning	A CT scan is required pre-operatively as part of the robotic planning process
Reduced soft tissue damage — smaller, more targeted movements mean less disruption to surrounding muscle	The technology does not eliminate all surgical risks — it reduces them
More consistent leg length — reduces the risk of needing a shoe lift post-surgery	Not suitable for every patient — complex revision cases or certain anatomies may require a conventional approach
Research shows lower overall complication rates compared to conventional THA	
Shorter hospital stay and faster functional recovery reported in multiple studies	
Reduced risk of blood transfusion requirement	
Potentially longer implant lifespan due to optimal positioning reducing wear	

How the Surgery Works — Step by Step

Here is exactly what happens, from start to finish, in plain English:

1	Pre-operative CT scan Before surgery, a CT scan of your hip is taken. This data is used by the surgical team to build a precise 3D model of your anatomy and create your personalised surgical plan — including exactly which implant size and positioning angles will be used.
2	Anaesthesia Robotic hip replacement is performed under general or spinal anaesthesia. Your anaesthetist will discuss which is most appropriate for you based on your health history and preferences.
3	The incision A carefully placed incision is made to access the hip joint. The robotic approach allows for a more targeted, less disruptive entry — reducing damage to the surrounding muscles compared to traditional techniques.
4	The damaged femoral head is removed The surgeon removes the damaged ball (femoral head) at the top of the thigh bone. The robotic system is active throughout, providing real-time guidance and boundary alerts to ensure every movement is within the pre-planned parameters.
5	The hip socket is prepared The damaged cartilage in the hip socket (acetabulum) is carefully removed and the socket is shaped to receive the new cup component. The robotic arm guides the reaming and ensures the socket is prepared at precisely the correct angle.
6	Implants are placed The new acetabular cup (socket) and femoral stem (shaft) components are inserted. The robotic system confirms correct positioning in real time before the components are fixed in place. A ceramic, metal, or polyethylene bearing surface is fitted between them.
7	The joint is tested The surgeon tests the new joint through a range of movements to confirm stability, leg length equality, and smooth function before closing.
8	Closure and recovery begins The incision is closed in layers. You'll be moved to recovery and, in most cases, encouraged to stand and take your first steps with assistance within hours of waking.

One Hip or Both? Understanding Your Options

If both of your hips are affected, you have a choice about how to approach the surgery — and it's an important one to understand before your consultation. There are two options when both hips need replacing:

Option 1 — Simultaneous Bilateral Hip Replacement (both hips in one session)

Both hips are replaced in a single operation under one anaesthetic. This is the most efficient approach — one surgery, one recovery, and you come home with both hips done. Research shows that for appropriately selected patients, simultaneous bilateral replacement results in better walking ability than staged procedures with a long gap between them.

Prices are indicative only. All medical information is for general guidance — please consult your surgical team for personalised advice.

✓ Advantages	✗ Considerations
One anaesthetic event — reduced cumulative anaesthetic risk compared to two separate procedures	Longer surgical time — operating on both hips in one session is more demanding on the body
One recovery period — you rehabilitate both hips together rather than going through the process twice	More intense initial recovery — both hips are sore and weaker simultaneously, making early mobility more challenging
One trip to India — significant savings on travel, accommodation, and logistics costs	Higher blood loss risk than a single hip procedure — though research suggests this is comparable to staged replacement overall
Studies show superior walking outcomes compared to long-interval staged procedures	Requires excellent general health and cardiovascular fitness — not suitable for everyone
Faster return to full mobility overall	Not recommended for patients with significant heart disease, lung conditions, or other high-risk factors
Lower total cost — significant saving compared to two separate procedures	

Option 2 — Staged Bilateral Hip Replacement (both hips, two procedures, seven days apart)

Both hips are replaced during the same visit to India, but in two separate procedures spaced approximately seven days apart. This staged approach within a single trip gives the body a brief recovery window between operations while still completing both hips in one journey.

✓ Advantages	✗ Considerations
More manageable on the body than simultaneous surgery — a week's rest between procedures	Two separate anaesthetic events within a short window
Allows the surgical team to assess your recovery from the first hip before proceeding with the second	Longer total time in India — you need to factor in the additional recovery days between procedures
Both hips are still completed within a single trip to India	Slightly higher cost than simultaneous surgery — additional theatre and facility fees apply
May be recommended for patients who are not ideal candidates for simultaneous bilateral surgery	More demanding logistically — requires careful planning of accommodation and support during the inter-procedure week
One rehabilitation journey overall — you still go home with both hips done	



Which option is right for you depends on your overall health, fitness, and the severity of disease in each hip. Your surgical team will make a clear recommendation at consultation. Neither option is better in all cases — the safest and most appropriate approach for your individual situation is always the priority.

Before Your Surgery — What to Expect

Your preparation begins well before you travel. Your surgical team will provide specific instructions, and you'll need to have the following arranged:



A CT scan of your hip(s) — this is required for robotic surgical planning and will be arranged in India on arrival



Pre-operative blood tests and medical assessment to confirm your fitness for surgery



Which medications to stop and when — particularly blood thinners, anti-inflammatories, and certain supplements



Stopping smoking at least six to eight weeks before surgery — smoking significantly impairs bone healing and recovery



Arranging your home for return — a ground-floor sleeping arrangement, grab rails, and raised toilet seat are all recommended



Organising someone to assist you at home for the first few weeks after you return to New Zealand



Day-of-surgery instructions — fasting times, what to wear, what to bring



Be completely honest with your surgical team about everything — your full health history, all medications and supplements, alcohol and tobacco use, and any previous joint problems or surgeries. This information directly affects your safety and the planning of your procedure.

Risks — The Honest Bit

Hip replacement is a major surgical procedure, and like all surgery it carries risks. The robotic-assisted approach significantly reduces several of these compared to conventional surgery, but it does not eliminate them. Your surgeon will discuss all of the following with you in full before you proceed.



Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolism (PE) — blood clots are one of the most significant risks after any lower limb surgery; blood thinners and early mobilisation are used to minimise this risk



Infection — either superficial wound infection or, rarely, deep joint infection, which may require further surgery

!	Dislocation — the new joint can dislocate if moved into extreme positions, particularly in the early weeks; robotic placement significantly reduces this risk compared to conventional surgery
!	Leg length discrepancy — despite robotic precision, minor differences in leg length can occasionally occur
!	Nerve or blood vessel injury — rare, but possible given the proximity of major neurovascular structures
!	Implant loosening over time — modern implants are highly durable, but loosening can occur years down the track, particularly with high-impact activity
!	Heterotopic ossification — unwanted bone formation around the new joint, which can restrict movement
!	Anaesthetic risks — including reaction to anaesthetic, respiratory complications, and cardiovascular events; higher for bilateral simultaneous surgery
!	Blood loss — transfusion may be required, particularly for bilateral procedures
!	Need for revision surgery — implants are designed to last 15–25 years; a second operation may eventually be required

Recovery — What Happens After Surgery

Hip replacement recovery is a gradual process, but most people are walking with assistance within 24 hours of surgery. Here's what the typical journey looks like:

Timeline	What to Expect
Day 1	You will be encouraged to sit up and stand with the help of a physiotherapist on the day of surgery or the morning after. Pain is managed with medication. A catheter may be in place for the first day.
Days 2–4	You'll be walking short distances with a frame or crutches. Physiotherapy begins in earnest — focusing on safe movement patterns, hip precautions, and building initial strength. Swelling and bruising are normal.
Days 4–7	Hospital discharge typically occurs in this window for single hip. Mobility is improving daily. You will need to follow hip precautions — avoiding bending the hip beyond 90 degrees, crossing your legs, or rotating the foot inward.
Weeks 1–6	You'll transition from a frame to crutches and then ideally to a single crutch or walking stick. Pain and swelling continue to reduce. Driving is typically not permitted for 6 weeks. No flying for at least 4–6 weeks post-surgery — this will affect your return travel planning.
Weeks 6–12	Most people are walking independently and resuming light daily activities. Outpatient physiotherapy continues. Swimming and cycling are typically permitted around this point with surgical team approval.
Months 3–6	Strength and endurance continue to improve. Most people return to full, independent daily life — including light work, social activities, and low-impact exercise.

Months 6–12+

Full recovery. The majority of patients report dramatically reduced pain and significantly improved mobility. Many describe it as transformative. Low-impact activities such as walking, swimming, cycling, and golf are encouraged long term.



Important travel planning note: flying long-haul too soon after hip surgery significantly increases the risk of deep vein thrombosis. We will plan your return travel carefully around your surgical date and recovery, including appropriate rest stopovers and compression stocking advice. Your safety on the journey home is part of our job.

Cost — India vs New Zealand

The savings available through robotic hip replacement in India are among the most significant of any procedure we facilitate. Here is a full cost comparison:

Procedure / Cost Item	India — Single Hip (NZD)	India — Bilateral Hips (NZD)	New Zealand (NZD approx.)
Robotic Total Hip Replacement (surgery, surgeon, anaesthetist, hospital)	\$12,250	\$22,770	\$30,000 – \$45,000
Bilateral — two hips in one session (simultaneous)	N/A	\$22,770	\$55,000 – \$80,000
Bilateral — two hips in two procedures, 7 days apart (staged)	N/A	\$24,070	\$60,000 – \$90,000
Pre-operative CT scan & medical assessment	Included	Included	~ \$500 – \$1,500
Post-operative physiotherapy in India	Included	Included	~ \$1,000 – \$3,000
Post-operative medications & dressings	~ \$100 – \$200	~ \$100 – \$200	~ \$200 – \$500

India pricing includes surgeon fee, anaesthetist, hospital stay, robotic system use, implants, and in-hospital physiotherapy. Bilateral staged pricing reflects the additional \$1,300 theatre and facility fee for the second procedure. Airfares, accommodation, transfers, and JBTG logistics fees are additional — see your personalised invoice for full costings.



A note about JBTG Limited's role. We organise everything around your surgery — your flights, hotel, all your transfers, and we escort you every step of the way. We are not medical professionals. Your surgical team, your treatment decisions, and your medical contract are between you and the hospital directly. Our job is to make sure you get there, you're supported throughout, and you come home safely.

Insurance & Visa

Travel insurance is highly recommended for anyone travelling to India for surgery. Standard New Zealand travel insurance policies will not cover elective procedures, so it is important to arrange specialist medical travel cover before you go. We work with Global Protective Solutions, who offer insurance specifically designed for medical tourists. Their policy covers the procedure itself and any complications for up to six months after your procedure date, including care back home in New Zealand. Please note that this is not a standard travel insurance policy — it does not cover the other elements of your trip such as flights, luggage, or cancellations.

You can enrol directly through our dedicated link at www.globalprotectivesolutions.com/enroll/bumstumsgums. A visa is also required to enter India, and while we cannot apply on your behalf, we will guide you through the process and make sure you have everything you need well in advance of travel.

Ready to Find Out More?

Here's how to get started — it's simpler than you might think:

1	Get in touch Call or email us for a no-obligation chat. Tell us about your hip situation and what you're hoping to achieve, and we'll take it from there.
2	We connect you with our brokers in India Our trusted on-the-ground medical brokers will assess your needs and connect you with the right orthopaedic surgical team for your specific case.
3	You receive a personalised quote The surgical team will review your information and provide a detailed quote — including whether single or bilateral surgery is recommended. No surprises, no hidden costs.
4	We arrange everything Once you're happy to go ahead, we take care of flights, hotel, transfers, and all logistics — including planning carefully around your post-operative travel requirements.
5	We travel with you You're not going alone. We escort you throughout the entire trip — to every appointment, every step of the way, and we make sure you get home safely.

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